

IN THE PATH OF THE GOLDEN HORDE:  
TOURISM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN  
A COASTAL DOMINICAN COMMUNITY

BY

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This is an anthropological study of change in a rural Dominican community in response to the recent introduction of large-scale enclave tourism into the region. Dominican government planners have long used the rhetoric of national development when promoting tourism within the country. A central argument for the government in sponsoring tourism is that the industry produces secondary growth through an economic "multiplier" effect, whereby expansion and concurrent benefits will occur in other traditional sectors of the economy as tourism expands.

Using a case study approach in examining the community of Luperón and its attempts to accommodate the intrusion of enclave tourism into its socio-economic and sociocultural structure, this dissertation illustrates ethnographically the limitations of tourism as a development tool in the Dominican Republic. The changes tourism has initiated in the traditional lifeways of local fishermen, and to a lesser extent agriculturalists and small business people, are reviewed in the context of a small rural coastal town with no prior exposure to large-scale "mass" tourism.



The study reveals that only a small proportion of the local population, chiefly the local elites, benefit from the introduction of the enclave tourist resort, while all members of the community must pay the negative social costs such as inflation associated with land speculation, loss of a sense of local control, and the elimination of privacy. In spite of this, as the local tourist system developed, some *luperonenses* tried to take more active roles in manipulating the industry for their own benefit. A small number of townspeople organized to promote the community's rights in response to what was perceived as a lack of equitable economic returns and social exploitation by enclave resort management. After minor initial successes, the failure of the community mobilization effort is linked to lack of local political support and resort management indifference.

This study concludes that a model for economic growth based on enclave tourism alone will not provide the impetus for regional economic diversification in the Dominican Republic. Enclave tourism has consistently been shown to integrate poorly with existing regional industries where introduced and is not designed to promote economic linkages at the community level. Rather, its inherent flaw is that resort management seeks to limit the interaction between the tourists and local community to improve their own profits.

## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

Nature Created The Perfect Harbour, The Superb White Sand Beach,  
The Breathtaking Views . . .

This very same unspoiled coastline, the site of Columbus' first settlement in the new world, graces Luperon's Ciudad Marina today. Unique in the Caribbean, Luperon signifies the most important resort community being developed along the Dominican Republic's north coast. This incredible "marina city," typifies Dominican tropical splendor at its best and is just 10 kms. from where the 1992 worldwide anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America will be celebrated. (Luperón Beach Resort promotional brochure 1988).

This is an anthropological study of change in a Dominican community. One of the most visible sources of community change appears to be the recent introduction of tourism into the region. In 1987, an international resort hotel opened its doors on the outskirts of the town of Luperón. Never having been the center of attention by large numbers of foreign tourists, the inhabitants had to adopt certain new strategies to cope with the influx of visitors and the economic opportunities they embodied. This is a study of how the host society reacts to the introduction of tourism. The community of Luperón is not unique in its responses to tourism development; rather, the adaptive processes the inhabitants are endeavoring to establish in the face of tourism growth, I argue, exhibit similar characteristics in numerous other coastal communities found in the Dominican Republic, the Caribbean, and developing countries throughout the world.

The focus of this dissertation then is to illustrate ethnographically how tourism is being incorporated into the community life of Luperón. Tourism is steadily being

adopted by many Less Developed Countries (LDCs) as one of the mainstays of their economies. A central thesis of tourism proponents and government planners is that tourism promotes secondary growth in other sectors of the economy, diversifying economies in small-scale societies such as the Caribbean that have long been economically dependent on cash crop agriculture or the export of a few raw minerals. My view is that all too frequently the political economy of tourism in the Caribbean mimics the pre-existing economic relationships the Caribbean nations have had in the past with those industrial nations of northern Europe and North America which controlled the destinies of the Caribbean peoples for so long and when tourism is introduced into a region today the prime beneficiaries are those industrialized nations who control the flow of tourists and those members of the national elite who can afford to invest in the tourism industry in the less developed tourist receiving countries. In this way tourism growth in the region can best be viewed as a form of dependent development or in its most negative form merely as another exploitative industry. I will demonstrate that those Dominican communities which provide the sites for tourism investment, the labor to support the industry's operations, and pay the social costs of its presence, typically retain little of the economic benefits derived from tourism. These benefits tend to bypass local communities and are siphoned into the pockets of the national elite and foreign investors.

Dominican government planners claim that tourism development is going to benefit the population in a region where introduced. This issue was clearly stated in government feasibility reports compiled by the firms of Zinder and Associates (1969) and Arespacochaga and Felipe (1970) when potential zones in the country were selected (ALIFD 1977:116). The Dominican government has been an avid supporter of tourism growth and its officials assert that elite controlled development in this industry will benefit all classes and industries through a "trickle down" economic impact. However,

is tourism a catalyst for positive social change in a community where only a small portion of the population directly or indirectly is involved in tourism related activities? I will demonstrate that in Luperón the only inhabitants who actually benefit from tourism are members of the national and local elite who control the Dominican side of the tourist trade and, to a much lesser degree, the small number of townspeople who have found full-time employment at the resort hotel or in the small tourist businesses in the town. Other individuals in the community involved in primary economic activities such as fishing and agriculture, for whom one would think local tourism would spark secondary economic opportunities, I will show, reap few positive economic benefits and are burdened with adjusting to the social transformation the community undergoes as tourists invade. By focusing on the sociocultural and socio-economic systems of local fishermen, and to a lesser extent on local agriculturalists and merchants, an argument is made here that tourism has failed as a form of development because the existing inequities in the local and regional social structure remain intact and the traditional economic activities which employ the majority of poorer classes benefit little, or not at all, from the introduction of tourism into their back yards.

Tourism is not a recent creation. One can argue that tourism behavior was found among the elite classes of ancient Greek and Roman societies. The religious pilgrimages of Christians to Canterbury, Santiago de Compostela, and Jerusalem during the Middle Ages, or the journey to Mecca by Moslems, could be considered as a touristic experience as well as an act of devotion by the faithful. Certainly the "Grand Tour" popular with the English aristocracy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries should be interpreted as a forerunner of modern tourism. The nineteenth century, with its industrialism and the creation of a network of efficient rail systems, made it economically feasible for even the middle-class to go away on holidays to distant locations in the pursuit of leisure and novel experience.



Several prominent anthropologists have concluded that forms of proto-tourism exist in the majority of human societies (c.f. Graburn 1983; D. Nash 1981). Dennison Nash makes no distinction between tourism in industrial and pre-industrial societies:

To conclude this discussion of tourism in human societies, we should reiterate that tourism, defined as leisure activity requiring travel, exists at all levels of sociocultural complexity. Its widespread existence would seem to be bound up with the ubiquity of leisure and travel. (1981: 464)

The fundamental difference between earlier forms of tourism, or proto-tourism, and that of the latter half of the twentieth century, is one of scope. It is only in the second half of the twentieth century that mass tourism and the all-encompassing tour package has sprung into existence.

Tourism has often been hailed by modern international financial interests as one of the most promising solutions to problems of revenue generation and unemployment in Less Developed Countries. Many LDCs, having few industries and being highly dependent on the exportation of goods from the primary sector, but with attractive natural landscapes, view tourism as an important growth industry. During the 1960s, the United Nations promoted tourism as a highly desired industry throughout the world. The United Nations deemed tourism to be so attractive that it called 1967, the International Tourism Year. Tourism is now the number one industry in the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Barbados, Jamaica, and a host of the smaller insular nation-states of the Caribbean.

Tourism, in the eyes of its proponents, is the "smoke-less" industry providing much needed employment and generating revenue needed to finance other forms of development within the host country. Its growth world-wide has been phenomenal and, until the past decade, only the international petroleum industry earnings surpassed it. The combined revenue of world tourism even managed to surpass those of the world petroleum corporations during the early 1980s in gross earnings (Seward and Spinrad 1982:7). These tourism earnings are generated largely from an industry of scale

responsible for moving tourists in mass volumes. The tourist becomes a commodity in a vast capitalistic enterprise whose repercussions on the host societies are, as yet, not fully documented.

The debate surrounding the role international tourism has played in promoting economic development in LDCs has polarized into two major theoretical perspectives. Proponents of tourism cite the role tourism can play: (1) as a source of revenue; (2) as a potential growth industry; (3) in its ability to exploit some competitive advantages (for example, sunshine or pristine beaches); (4) in providing employment; and, (5) as a catalyst for collateral growth in other economic sectors (Young 1973:132). Those critical of tourism as a mechanism for development maintain that the industry has produced limited results in promoting local economic growth and, in some instances, has proven to cause disruption and/or destruction of existing industries within the host country. Detractors claim that tourism is another example of dependency, but even so they admit that often some members of the host community profit from its introduction. However, they claim that the majority of the profits generated by the tourism enterprise leave the country or remain to benefit only the local elites. Even the advocates of this type of development realize that "tourism development does indeed change the economic structure of the host country," and these effects are greater in less developed nations (Mill and Morrison 1985:231).

The tourism of today is part of a complex global industry involving many different entities and the metropolitan tourist is just one small cog in a vast enterprise encompassing all corners of the world. Almost twenty years ago Harry Matthews described the structure of this industry in the late twentieth century:

International tourism today must be described primarily as *mass* tourism – the movement of large numbers of travelers from one country to another by means of mass transport, and this involves mass hotel accommodations, and above all, mass selling. It is precisely this quality of modernism that makes the industry so complex and so highly political. The activity which we call tourism has become intensely institutionalized and competitive. (1978:3)



The institutions which control the international tourist trade have compiled volumes on tourist behavior, spending patterns, and tourist attractions. A multi-billion dollar business, the tourist industry can be found penetrating the interior of the Amazon basin, Antarctica, or the isolated islands of the Pacific. In smaller countries the tourism sector is exceedingly visible and, depending on the numbers of tourists visiting, can have a profoundly disruptive effect on the social structure of the host society.

Tourism is a market and the tourist has become another commodity dominated by corporate capitalism (Matthews 1978:75). The tourism market is controlled by the first world nations of northern Europe and North America and the majority of tourists come from these areas. The tourist becomes a commodity to be bid for on an open market. In the Caribbean, where most tourist destinations offer the same types of attractions such as sun, sea, sand, and "exotic" tropical treats, the competition for the limited tourist market share is especially fierce. This places the tour company in an advantageous position whereby they will contract with those Caribbean tourist resorts which offer the most by way of tourist accommodations for the least amount of money. The Dominican Republic has been extremely successful in attracting large numbers of foreign visitors; however, it has accomplished this by luring large numbers of tour package tourists. With 14 percent of the rooms available in the Caribbean, it attracts 11 percent of all visitors to the region but manages to receive only 8.7 percent of the total tourist expenditures (ECI 1990:29).

Tourism has managed to become the largest income generating industry in the Dominican Republic and its growth has not yet been checked. The economic success of tourism is especially evident when it is compared to the sluggish performance of more traditional industries such as agriculture and mining which have been declining in productivity since 1982. The questions needing to be addressed are has tourism met the expectation of the government development model and, in what ways has tourism influenced other aspects of society?

The Dominican government claimed that tourist activity would provide the impetus for other service industries to develop or expand, and that traditional industries such as agriculture and fishing would benefit by forming new economic linkages with a burgeoning tourist market. In other Caribbean nations it has been demonstrated that a *de facto* linkage exists between tourism and virtually every other sector of the economy, particularly construction, light industry, furniture manufacturing, agriculture and fishing (Miller 1985:293). The problem is that these linkages tend to be tenuous in the best of circumstances and rarely provide the growth in scale within the national economy that governmental planners assert will be generated. Furthermore, the cost of developing a viable tourist industry where it previously did not exist, and where manufacturing industries are not well developed, implies the importation of a vast amount of goods from abroad. The cost of paying for these imported goods will result in a reduction of the benefits derived from tourism. This is referred to as the economic leakage related to tourism. In the Dominican Republic it has been demonstrated that roughly 33 percent of every dollar of hard currency earned from tourism left the country to finance imports directly related to the industry, while another 15-20 percent left the nation to pay for imports indirectly related to tourism (ECI 1990:22).

Evidence from elsewhere in the Caribbean suggests that some local groups from traditional industries, such as fishing, can economically benefit from sales of foodstuffs directly to tourist businesses and the tourist (Kitner 1986). However, this requires a form of organization such as a marketing cooperative where local producers and the tourist industry interact as equals. The tourist resorts and their clientele demand high quality products in a reliable supply. Most individual producers cannot provide guarantees that they will deliver goods in the quality and quantity demanded by tourist establishments. This prevents many small producers from benefiting directly from the growth of a tourist market, even when it is located in close proximity. Typically, it will

be the regional intermediaries and wholesalers of agricultural produce or seafood that profit.

Metropolitan countries and their transnational companies have almost complete control of the international tourist trade because they furnish the tourists, control the transportation lines, and frequently exhibit an inordinate amount of control of the industry in host nations through private ownership of local resorts (S. Britton 1982:340-341). The reliance of Caribbean nations on the whims of metropolitan transnational corporations, and their fickle tourist consumers, lends credence to those researchers who argue that the introduction of tourism is, all too often, another form of dependent development. Economic leakages to metropolitan nations, caused by the large-scale importation of consumer goods into developing nations to support the needs of tourism, have been calculated to be so great in some Third World countries that little more than 22-25 percent of the retail price of a tourist's holiday is actually received by the host country (Lea 1988:13). The position the Dominican government finds itself vis-à-vis the multinational tourist companies is one of relative powerlessness. If the government does not acquiesce to the demands of these multinational corporations the tourists will go to Jamaica, Mexico, Antigua, or a host of other LDC locations offering the same fare, self-indulgent leisure activities.

One would surmise that an industry with such colossal market potential and income generating opportunities would incite interest in the academic forum as a topic worthy of scholarly investigation. Until the early 1970s this was not the case. The importance of packaged mass tourism as a catalyst for culture change was largely ignored by social scientists prior to this time with a few exceptions (c.f. Nuñez 1963). One of the first conferences of social scientists interested in tourism was held only in 1974 (Mathieson and Wall 1982:159). The realization that tourism development produces profound economic and social change where it is introduced is slowly becoming accepted as a

serious issue needing further investigation. A few social scientists have begun to pay tourism the theoretical attention it deserves and to further our knowledge on its role in bringing about cultural and economic change.

One issue still needing to be resolved is to categorize just what is a tourist. How does one best define a tourist? Most of us can quickly develop an image of what a typical "tourist" should look like — a loud Hawaiian shirt, Bermuda shorts, straw hat, and camera; but what behavior patterns typically sets a tourist apart from others in a host setting? A completely satisfactory definition of a tourist still eludes scholars. Valene L. Smith defines a tourist as "a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home" (1989:1). Nash asserts that such a definition of a tourist is at best "somewhat fuzzy" (1978:136).

Both anthropologists and sociologists have tried to categorize modern tourists in various groups. Cohen (1972) developed a useful typology where he defined four types of tourists: (1) the organized tourist; (2) the individual mass tourist; (3) the explorer; and, (4) the drifter. All of these types share in common the fact that they are temporarily leisured and visiting a location outside of normal day to day activities. Smith further refines her typology to include such categories as "Explorer," "Elite," "Off-beat," "Unusual," "Incipient Mass," "Mass," and "Charter" tourists, each with their own level of willingness to adapt to local norms (1989:12). Those classified as "Mass" and "Charter" tourists by Smith, or the "organized" and "individual mass" tourists by Cohen, are the focus of this anthropological study because they constitute the majority of tourists visiting the Dominican Republic where they congregate in enclave resorts located in governmentally designated tourist zones (see Figure 1), isolated in gilded splendor from the often squalid reality of Dominican life surrounding these islands of opulence, and ultimately contribute little to improvement of either the



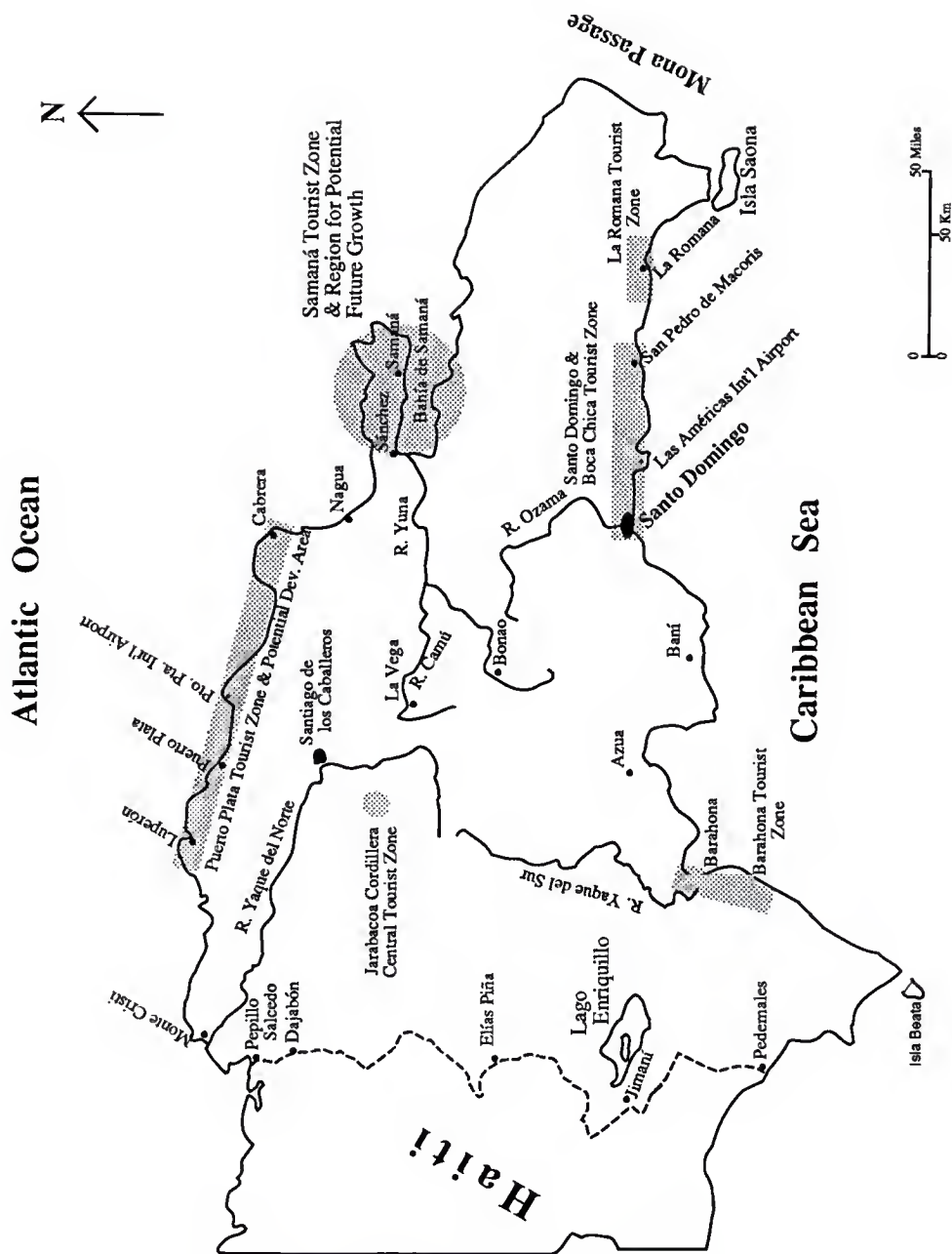


Figure 1: The Dominican Republic and Government Designated Tourist Zones in 1989.

quality of life of the average Dominican or to the development of the communities situated near these international tourist destinations.

The "mass" tourist is the result of an increasingly multinational corporate approach to tourism. These tourists are frequently not concerned with the host nation as a learning experience; rather, they are seeking gratification of their own needs in a pleasure periphery which provides the seven S's — sun, sea, sand, sex, sights, savings and servility.<sup>1</sup> Whether one vacations in the Dominican Republic or in Tahiti is often immaterial to the individual mass tourist, as long as modern amenities are available and the price is considered a bargain. The enclave tourist resorts and "mass" tourists go hand-in-hand when a tourism of scale is promoted by host governments of LDCs, and the Dominican Republic is no exception.

All too often LDCs initiate this form of development strategy purely to gain an economic advantage, not comprehending, or ignoring, the profound secondary effects, both economic and social, this industry can have within a small nation. Economists have produced well-documented studies on the effects of tourism on national economies and its place in the world economy (c.f. Archer 1977; Cleverdon and Edwards 1982; Matthews 1978). Political scientists and geographers have also made significant contributions to the scientific study of tourism in the past twenty years (c.f. R. Britton 1977; S. Britton 1982; Pearce 1989) and sociologists have also contributed much to the study of tourism related group behavior (c.f. Cohen 1984; Dann and Cohen 1991; de Kadt 1979). Yet the scientific study of tourism is still in its infancy. Sound development proposals which improve the benefits of tourism, while ameliorating its

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<sup>1</sup> The five S's were coined by Harry G. Matthews in his 1978 book International Tourism: A Political and Social Analysis. I have added two terms, sea and sand, to the original five to reflect the coastal character typical of Caribbean tourism. Tourism development in the coastal regions of the Caribbean far overshadow growth in other geographical areas.



negative impact, are still being sought and innovative approaches are continually being tested.

Anthropologists have much to contribute to the study of tourism although our principal concerns to date have been how the host society reacts to the introduction of tourism. The community study approach of anthropology could potentially provide unique insights into tourist-host interaction and its sociocultural impact. Following the dictates of acculturation theory, tourism as an impetus for community change has been a significant issue for anthropological inquiry. Nevertheless, tourism's impact on community social structure and host populations should also be deemed an important subject for anthropological study. Today, tourists can be found in all parts of the globe and tourism is the largest foreign exchange generator for many developing nations. Unfortunately, there has been a hesitancy among many anthropologists to study tourism. Perhaps the banal superficiality of tourism detracts serious attention from its major consequences. Yet social scientists can no longer afford to ignore the impact of tourism; its repercussions are felt throughout society when introduced. The study of the community of Luperón and its responses to tourism will help to further our knowledge of a complex industry's local manifestations, its success as a development tool, and the social benefits and costs associated with its introduction.

In particular, tourism is almost always associated with "development" in the rhetoric of governments, both local and national, and is described as a mechanism which promotes positive changes, particularly economic ones, among those who are thirsty for mobility and change. Thus, the development of agriculture, fishing, or tourism in a region should not be promoted "in isolation independent of the other potential uses of resources" (Field and Burch 1988:8). Nor, should they be studied as distinctly unrelated phenomena. They are all part of a complex interrelated web of ecological, economic, and social relationships which, when viewed holistically, merge together to define behavioral patterns of the inhabitants. Population growth, natural resource

degradation, and increasing disparities between the rich and the poor are all important issues each *luperonense* must take into account when making decisions on the type of adaptive strategy he or she is to choose.

Therefore, tourism should not be studied as being isolated from other regional economic activities. However, a central concern here is how well integrated tourism is with other economic activities of the region. Does it promote the secondary growth in other economic industries which its proponents claim and, if it does, who are the beneficiaries of this newly created boon? It is natural in a development project controlled by private investors that the primary beneficiaries will be those elites in control, but a central concern of this study is to examine how the benefits derived from primary and secondary tourism growth are dissipated throughout the community. Are new economic opportunities available for members of all levels of Luperón's social structure?

Another question this study is concerned with is the ecological and social cost of tourism. The negative social costs of tourism frequently cited, such as increased crime, inflation, and/or the loss of local hegemony, are often not compensated by higher economic returns among the majority of individuals in a host community (Daltabuit and Pi-Sunyer 1990:9; Manning 1982:14). Furthermore, there is a real danger that tourism can become an indirect mechanism for the destruction of pre-existing industries in the host nation because "everyone is anxious to divert his or her resources to the 'carousel' of tourism" (Yunén 1977:75). What is the impact of this newly introduced industry on the cultural ecology of the inhabitants? Do the most marginal of Luperón's inhabitants view tourism as another economic opportunity to include in their occupational repertoire? Can tourism be interpreted as being one part of a complex adaptive strategy commonly found in many islands of the Caribbean called occupational multiplicity? Occupational multiplicity, described by Lambros Comitas, refers to an adaptive strategy:

wherein the modal adult is systematically engaged in a number of gainful activities, which for him form an integrated economic complex. This occupational multiplicity is the nexus of a socio-economic type significantly different from that of either the peasant, farmer, or plantation types in the West Indies. (1973:157)

Occupational multiplicity is an economic strategy being utilized by many of the poorest *luperonense* households, as it is among the poor of most societies, as a method of coping in an increasingly marginal environment. If the information cited by Dominican planners and tourism proponents is correct, the introduction of tourism into the region provides an additional economic option for households; providing at least one job indirectly related to tourism for every one directly created in the industry (ONAPLAN 1978:128).

Finally, tourism brings up the issues of power and racism. This temporary mass migration of people in pursuit of leisure and diversion from their "normal" everyday lifestyles is bringing increasing numbers of people in the world, with highly diverse cultural backgrounds, into contact at a rate never before experienced. Tourism has become a major mechanism of culture contact in the world today:

As we enter the final quarter of this century tourism still remains a frontier, not because it is new (it is not), but because of the gigantic revolutions of barely half a century—in transportation and communication, above all—that for the first time in human history enable people of many cultures to come into direct contact and even close association. In familiar anthropological terms (although conflict and prejudice are endemic, too), both acculturation and assimilation occur at an unprecedented rate. (Brameld and Matsuyama 1978:181)

It is the nature of this contact, and its attendant cultural responses, which is of central interest to the social scientist. Rarely can the members of a developing nation host society decide how and when such contact will be made. They are often powerless to stop the intrusion of the "Golden Horde" into their everyday activities.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The term the "Golden Horde" was first used in 1975 by Turner and Ash in their book The Golden Hordes. International Tourism and the Pleasure Periphery. I have borrowed the term to refer to the "mass tourists" visiting the Dominican Republic.

With the arrival of tourism comes disruption. It may be relatively benign. Tourists walking in the streets taking photographs do little damage. But when tourists poke their heads into your home and photograph you cooking, weaving, or having a friendly chat with neighbors, then the tranquility of life has been, at least marginally, disrupted. Who would accept a stranger taking a photograph of them through their own window in North America or Europe? This type of behavior, while shunned within our own societies, is commonplace in LDC host societies. The member of the "Golden Horde" coming from a developed nation may view the experience of being a tourist as a period of licence to act otherwise from culturally perscribed norms of his or her society and will engage in behavior that he or she would never contemplate back home. Individuals must either learn to cope with this behavior or react by "closing off their life to outsiders" through the erection of social or physical barriers to keep the tourists at bay (Pi-Sunyer 1982:9).

The majority of those members of the "Golden Horde" who flock to LDC tourist locations are middle- or upper-class whites. Not familiar with the regional distinctions, they have a tendency to view host populations according to standards found within their own society. Thus, to many U.S. citizens Dominicans are Spanish-speaking blacks. The fact that the majority of Dominicans identify strongly with their Hispano-European heritage and ignore their African heritage is lost to many tourists. To the average Dominican black is not beautiful. Black is Haitian, backward, uncivilized, and to call someone an African is one of the strongest of insults. People in Luperón were abhorred to learn that some tourists had described them as highly attractive Afro-Americans. "Don't they realize that we are *indios* (a Dominican term for individuals of mixed European, African, and remotely possible Amerindian descent) was the response on one occasion?" Alas, all too often they do not.

These subtleties are frequently lost on the majority of tourists. They are on holiday, a period of license from everyday concerns, and many may never have even heard of



the Dominican Republic or had any knowledge of the nation's history or culture prior to planning their vacation with the local travel agent. Some North Americans and Europeans come to the Caribbean to steep themselves in the "myth of black virility" (Manning 1982:13). Acting in ways they might never dare to do in their own societies, these tourists seek out host companions and the growth of prostitution, both male and female, is a natural secondary effect of tourism.

This was observed even in the relatively sedate setting of Luperón. While prostitutes were banned from entering resort property, the resort activities "boys" competed with each other to see how many conquests could be made. Gifts, cash, trips, and proposals of marriage were all part of the game. Hustling and tourism go hand in hand, and as they say in the Caribbean, "tourism is whorism," female and male (Manning 1982:14). Manning claims this is a method of counter-exploitation which some members of the host population utilize when the tourist industry is seen as exploitative (1982:14). Tourism in regions where the host community participates to a large extent directly in the industry appears "more stable, successful, and profitable than tourism controlled by outsiders" (Callimanopulos 1982:5). Many inhabitants of Luperón informed me that the structure of tourism in its present form was exploitative, with few individuals in the community besides the local elite receiving economic benefits, and felt that tourism could be better incorporated into the economic lifeways of the community.

### The Community of Luperón

Luperón is a small town located on the north coast of the Dominican Republic within the confines of the Puerta Plata Tourist Zone (see Figure 1). In terms of population size and land mass the Dominican Republic is a large country by Caribbean standards. Located in the Greater Antilles, the Dominican Republic shares the second largest island

in the Caribbean, Hispaniola, with its neighbor to the west, Haiti.<sup>3</sup> The land mass of the Dominican Republic is 18,816 square miles, which in territory is slightly larger than the states of New Hampshire and Vermont combined (Kryzanek and Wiarda 1988:5). Population figures for the country are best considered approximations. The official census of 1981, conducted by the Dominican government, totaled 5,648,000 inhabitants (CEPAL 1988:16). Another source concluded that in 1982 the Dominican Republic had a population of 6,249,500 (Graham and Edwards 1984:2). Even with a decline in the rate of annual population growth, population predictions for the year A.D. 2000 are that there will be in excess of 9,000,000 Dominicans living on the island (Graham and Edwards 1984:2).

The small northern coastal town of approximately 3500 inhabitants called Luperón is located in the *municipio* (in the context of the Dominican Republic the equivalent of a provincial county) of the same name within the province of Puerto Plata. The town is located on a small, well-protected bay, the Bahía de Gracias, considered to be one of the best "hurricane holes "on the north coast of Hispaniola.<sup>4</sup> Approximately twenty-five

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<sup>3</sup> The island of Hispaniola was originally named Española by the Spanish colonists. This name was corrupted into "Hispaniola" by other European powers during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when they were considered interlopers in the Spanish Main. Hispaniola, while technically an incorrect bastardization of the colonial name for the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo, has become the name used for the second largest island in the Greater Antilles. In this dissertation Hispaniola will be used when referring to the whole of the island, except for in the beginning section of Chapter Three, where the historical development of the northern coast of the colony is discussed. In this chapter, the name Española will be used when discussing the province of Puerto Plata and the region of Luperón during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries.

<sup>4</sup> The term "hurricane hole" refers to a well-protected anchorage offering shelter from the severe effects of the cyclonic storms which seasonally enter the Caribbean between July and December. When Hurricane Hugo was threatening the north coast of Hispaniola in 1989, yachts, small cargo ships and fishing boats, some 50 meters or more in length, came from Puerto Plata and many other locations to anchor in the relative safety of Bahía de Gracias. The small entrance with a northwest exposure and protecting reefs, plus hills surrounding the bay provides an anchorage which offers protection in all but the worst tropical storms.



kilometers to the east is the city of Puerto Plata. Puerto Plata is a major port on the north coast and the provincial capital. This city is also the hub of the tourism industry for the north part of the country. It is easily accessible by air, being serviced by the Puerto Plata International Airport, and is a port of call for several cruise lines. The tourism industry has fueled migration and the number of inhabitants living in Puerto Plata is now over 100,000.

The north coast of the Dominican Republic has prevailing winds from the northeast and a strong Atlantic current runs east to west sweeping near the coastline. Its coastal ecology differs significantly from the Caribbean waters of the south coast. The coastal shelf is very narrow, near Luperón extending only 500 meters outward before plunging down to great depths. The coast near Luperón is characterized mainly by rock outcrops and sandy beaches broken by occasional mangrove forests skirting the shore line. Located on the narrow coastal shelf, coral reefs are the home for many neritic marine species harvested by the fishermen of Luperón.

The Bahía de Gracias (Luperón Bay) is lined on all sides by mangroves. These play a critical ecological role in relation to marine environment productivity in the Dominican Republic:

In the Dominican Republic, mangroves are essential to several fisheries; as habitat for the mangrove oyster Crassostrea rhizophorae; as nursery grounds for many species of coral-associated fish, the major fishery in the country; and for shrimp in the Bahía de Samaná. (Hartshorn *et al.* 1981:59)

The fishermen of the local inshore fleet rely heavily on the bait fish trapped in the bay. Its surrounding mangroves protect and nurture the fry of the marine species harvested by these fishermen on the outlying reefs. This same shore line is zoned for tourism development.

West of Luperón, fifteen kilometers by poorly maintained coastal road, can be found the ruins of La Isabela. This was the first permanent Spanish settlement in the

New World, founded by Christopher Columbus in the year A.D. 1494. La Isabela, or El Castillo as it is called locally, is presently undergoing archaeological reconstruction. Because of its prime potential as a tourist attraction and its location within the *municipio* of Luperón, La Isabela will continue to act as a catalyst for tourism growth in the region. Already it is becoming a mecca for foreign tourists. Large-scale festivities occurred during 1992, to celebrate the quincentennial anniversary of Christopher Columbus's "discovery" of the New World. Many international dignitaries attended the celebration, and tourists flocked to this historical site; one can only wonder how local resources, both natural and human, have reacted to this influx of tourists.

Visible to the south of Luperón are the peaks of the Cordillera Septentrional. They are located parallel to the narrow northern coastal plain from Monte Cristi to Nagua. Almost directly to the south of Luperón, on the other side of the Cordillera Septentrional, is Santiago de los Caballeros. This is the second largest city in the Dominican Republic and a major marketing center for Luperón. Most crops grown in Luperón are sold in the markets of this city. Most agricultural producers in Luperón sell their crops to intermediaries (*camioneros*) who purchase the crops at the farmer's gate and then transport them to wholesale and retail markets in Santiago (c.f. La Gra 1983; Norvell and Billingsley 1971). Local *colmados* or *pulperías* (small stores) also purchase small quantities of local crops, but local demand is too low to absorb any significant portion of local production. The majority of the merchandise sold in the town stores is purchased from wholesalers and retailers in Santiago and transported into the region. Basic foodstuffs such as wheat bread, corn meal, and spaghetti are also transported into the region since there are no bakeries, food processing plants, or grain mills in the *municipio*.

The focus of economic life in Luperón has traditionally been in primary sector activities. The traditional agricultural focus of Luperón is reflected in the fact that the

town's patron saint is San Isidro Labrador. San Isidro Labrador, whose feast day is the 15th of May, is considered a patron saint of farmers (Muñoz 1979: 147). Agricultural work employs the majority of people in the *municipio*. Cattle-raising is an important occupation for the local elite. Livestock, maize, cotton, sugar, and recently sorghum, are produced by the larger landowners in the region.<sup>5</sup> The small farmers produce tobacco, peanuts, plantains, sweet manioc, beans, pigeon peas, and various fruits. Some members of the poorest households, those that have no land or only a small plot, do wage labor for the larger landowners in the area when it is available. Rural day laborers, of both Dominican and Haitian ancestry, work long hours during the peak sugar, maize and lime harvesting seasons, but wage work is difficult to encounter near Luperón during the agricultural off season from April to September.

The town of Luperón is the center of the *municipio's* social and economic life. Historically, it functioned to service the needs of agriculturalists living nearby. Such basic services as a medical clinic, dental clinic, hardware stores, veterinary services, and tool repair can be found here. In the town local farmers can obtain credit through the branch office of the Banco Agrícola; here, too, they can obtain credit privately through personal connections with various local merchants who offer this service. The town is also the center for all municipal offices and the only secondary school servicing the *municipio* is located in the town. Within the town can be found the only Catholic church in the *municipio* with a priest in permanent residence. There are also the churches of several different Protestant sects. The religious needs of the rural

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<sup>5</sup> Cotton once was an important crop grown in the region. Grown on small and middle sized farms in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, it later was grown in two locations in Luperón on large plantations controlled by members of the Trujillo family. When Trujillo was assassinated the State took over control of these cotton plantations and they came under the jurisdiction of the Secretariat of State for Agriculture (SEA). Cotton production was SEA controlled until 1991 when these plantations were closed. The land has since been redistributed in 1991 and 1992 in plots averaging sixteen tareas to individual Luperonenses by President Balaguer.

population of Luperón are served by the sporadic visits of lay ministers representing various denominations both Catholic and Protestant. For the devout in need of weekly administrations, a trip to the town to worship is mandatory.

As a coastal town with a good harbor, fishing and shipping have played an important, albeit minor, economic role in the life of the community. The harbor serves as port for several ocean-going fishing vessels, many smaller coastal fishing boats, and a navy corvette. However, because of a narrow entrance and relatively shallow bay which is only eight meters deep at its maximum, boats entering the harbor are by necessity limited in size and draft. Municipal dock facilities presently consist of one concrete pier. The tourist complex called Ciudad Marina also has a small marina located in a protected arm of the bay on the west side which was functioning in 1989. In January 1992, the resort marina was in poor repair and at that time not functioning. For almost 500 years the harbor was legally closed to all but Dominican vessels, but in August 1990, it was opened to international shipping. On a visit to the harbor in January 1992, nine foreign yachts could be seen anchored in the bay.

Fishing has always provided some *luperonenses* with an alternative to agriculture. For landless individuals, or for those individuals with too small a parcel of land to support a family, harvesting the marine resources off the coast of Luperón meant food for subsistence and an alternative source of income. The sea's resources have always been an integral part of the local economy. Full-time fishermen are not numerous in the *municipio*, but many coastal inhabitants rely in part on the natural resources of the sea to make ends meet.

It will be chiefly through the lives of these fishermen, both part-time and full-time, that the collateral effects of tourism will be reviewed most closely in this ethnography. However, some data from agriculture and local commerce will also be presented to show that tourism has relatively little positive economic impact in many aspects of



community life. Tourism on the north coast of the Dominican Republic is a form of coastal development. The introduction of this industry brings fishermen, agriculturalists, other members of the coastal population, and tourists into direct contact and, sometimes, competition over access to the natural resources the terrestrial, littoral and marine environments of the region provide. The goal of this research was to discover if, and to what degree, the introduction of tourism provided increased income and employment opportunities for individuals working in traditional regional occupations. As mentioned before linkages exist between tourism and virtually every other sector of the economy. These linkages with agriculture, construction, livestock raising, etc., tenuous as they may be, also exist in Luperón. However, time and funding limitations made it necessary to focus chiefly on one economic activity and I chose to examine if tourism provided a new market for the fishermen of Luperón and in what manner, if at all, did these industries articulate with each other.

#### Site Selection: The Research Attributes of Luperón

During the summer of 1986, I went to the Dominican Republic for the first time to investigate possible communities as sites for my doctoral research on maritime adaptations, tourism, and culture change. I selected the Dominican Republic's northern coast as the primary location for my research because of an interest in its unique historical relationship with the economic centers of northern Europe and North America and its relatively recent entrance into the tourism industry. Large-scale tourism development had only been introduced in the Puerto Plata area in 1978. Existing literature indicated that fishing cooperatives and associations were actively being organized in this region through the auspices of both international and national development agencies to provide marine products for both international, national, and



regional markets. One of my hypotheses was that the chief beneficiaries of any increased availability of marine products at the regional level would be those enterprises catering to tourist palates.

The first goal was to locate a community which met specifications in three areas. The first criterion was that the community had a group of inhabitants involved in maritime resource exploitation. Furthermore, plans included locating a community where some of the fishermen were organized into a fishing cooperative, fishing association, or, at least, in the process of coalescing into such an organized unit. Thirdly, the ideal community should be located within the governmentally designated Puerto Plata–North Coast tourist development zone, but one that was still undeveloped or only in the incipient stage of tourism development. Finally, the community should be sufficiently small so that preliminary research could be completed by one researcher in a single year.

I rented a motorcycle and began a five week tour of the coastal communities on the north coast of the country looking for a suitable research location. Traveling from the western port of Monte Cristi near the frontier with Haiti, passing through the already bustling tourist locales of Puerto Plata and Sosúa, my voyage took me as far east as the isolated town of Samaná visiting many potential sites. Sometimes stops in various locations lasted for a few days, sometimes for a few hours, but at the end of the trip, after visiting numerous coastal communities, I knew that I had found the community where my research was going to be conducted. It was in the town of Luperón where all my criteria were met and, as I later discovered, it had some hitherto unknown benefits.

The beneficial aspects of selecting Luperón as my research community over other potential sites came to the fore upon my return to the United States. During a discussion of my findings with my colleague at the University of Florida, Manuel Vargas, he mentioned that he spent two years living in the community while working for the Dominican government as an agronomist. His knowledge of the community and

personal contacts with local individuals were to greatly facilitate my entrance into the social life of Luperón. His help proved invaluable and I am deeply indebted to him.

### Preliminary Research Plans and their Evolution

My original research design was to examine to what degree the local fishermen were economically articulated with the newly introduced tourism resort in Luperón. Plans had been made to investigate if membership in the Fishermen's Association contributed to the improvement of the socio-economic status of fishermen and if members of the Fishermen's Association were benefiting more from the introduction of tourism than non-members. Also, initial plans had been to find out if being affiliated with the Fishermen's Association improved the quality of life among its members.

Another issue central to my investigation was to study the marketing patterns of the newly organized Fishermen's Association. Was this organization improving marine protein availability in local markets, or was most of the marine harvest being directed elsewhere, such as the local tourist establishments? Finally, the social context of fishing within the community was to be studied since very little has been published on the fisheries of the Dominican north coast, or on the relationship between households deriving their livelihood from fishing and their place in the social organization of a Dominican community.

Fishing in the Dominican Republic is perceived as a low status occupation. In general, fishermen are viewed as being part of the lowest rung of the social hierarchy in the Dominican class structure (Krute-George 1978:14). In a marginal socio-economic environment, those members on the lowest rung of society, according to the findings of Comitas, will seek out a variety of occupations because many do not have land to farm and the few that do have holdings too small to rely solely on agriculture (1973:160). In

her study of Dominican fishermen in the southwestern region of the country, Eugenia Krute-George tested Comitas's hypothesis that the amount of time invested in fishing would be dependent on the the types of work opportunities available onshore (1978:15).

In Jamaica, Comitas concluded that fishing, since its demands are more flexible than agriculture or wage labor with regard to time and labor allocation, was the occupation most likely to be adapted to meet the schedules of the other economic activities an individual was engaged in (1973:169). In the Dominican Republic, Krute-George discovered that onshore work opportunities for fishermen were extremely limited, in part because of their low social status (1978:15-16). She concludes that a correlation exists between the amount of onshore labor available and the number of professional fishermen in an area.

The less terrestrial work available, the greater the numbers of individuals devoting themselves exclusively to fishing (Krute-George 1978:17). If this was true on the north coast as well, one could predict that some of the most marginal fishermen in Luperón would take advantage of the increased number of jobs the introduction of tourism would provide, and either give up fishing or delegate it to a secondary occupation in favor of the higher wages tourism work would provide. This was another issue I planned to examine closely while in the community of Luperón working with the local fisher folk: Were fishing individuals choosing to work in the tourist industry rather than the more arduous task of making a living from the sea and, if they were, how many were able to take advantage of this new opportunity.

Since 1967, the development of marine fisheries has been implemented by the government of the Dominican Republic as part of a coordinated effort to improve the country's food production. I planned to examine the impact of a governmentally stimulated increase in the use of mechanized fishing technology introduced in the town

of Luperón. More specifically, the plan was to discover to what degree increased mechanization resulted in improvements in the socio-economic status of the fishermen involved and if this newly introduced mechanization had stimulated an increase in the availability of affordable marine proteins in the local and regional markets. If mechanization had not improved local income and protein availability, I hoped to identify causal factors which had frustrated stated governmental intent.

The introduction of mechanized fishing vessels has had serious economic and social repercussions in various fishing communities in the Caribbean. George Epple demonstrated that the introduction of mechanized fishing fleets in Grenada contributed to the following: (1) an expansion of the traditional fishing zones; (2) changes in harvesting patterns; (3) a shift in the production and marketing structures from rural to urban centers; (4) a shift from subsistence-oriented to a mixed subsistence-commercial fishery; and finally, (5) a shift in the pattern of ownership whereby nonfishing entrepreneurs came to dominate the industry (1977:181-183). In Grenada, as elsewhere in the world, one consequence of fisheries development was the "proletarianization" of the majority of local fishermen (Acheson 1981:306).

Epple demonstrated that mechanization can result in improved earnings for those fishermen able to invest in modern technology, but in certain circumstances it also leads to the overall reduction in the numbers of independent owners employed in the industry (1977:185). This has potential negative impact on the first of my dependent variables — local income derived from marine adaptive strategies. Elsewhere in the world studies have illustrated that attempts to develop artisanal fishing fleets by introducing mechanized boats and more efficient gear frequently had the secondary effects of increasing local unemployment (c.f. Alexander 1976; Flores 1973; McGoodwin 1979). Several studies conducted in the Caribbean region of government sponsored development plans to increase artisanal fishing efficiency through mechanization produced similar conclusions (Berleant-Schiller 1981:224; Flores 1973:17).



Available literature also suggested that marine protein availability in the local market place would be negatively affected by increased mechanization and by the development of a local tourism industry. This is likely to occur because market restructurings are likely in the wake of both mechanization and a growing tourism demand for these products. It has been demonstrated that traditional market systems make significant contributions in meeting consumer needs at the regional or national levels (Forman and Riegelhaupt 1970:189-190). Subsistence–Commercial Market theory suggests that during a period of transition from subsistence to commercial market systems traditional interpersonal relationships are destabilized (Forman and Riegelhaupt 1970:189; Stoffle 1986:22). Middlemen are replaced by wholesalers and the important distribution functions of the local intermediaries with local retailers and consumers are no longer operational, resulting in a paradoxical scarcity of marine products despite higher yields of the biomass harvested. In one documented non-Caribbean case, increased mechanization and the development of a commercial fleet resulted in a dramatic decline in the local availability of marine proteins among coastal populations and, thus, on the nutritional status of those affected (Keddie 1971:25).

Two social scientists have gone so far to say that the introduction of mechanized fishing techniques "have not for the most part improved significantly the levels of living of artisanal fishing households and have often worsened their position" (Lockwood and Ruddle 1976:12). The appropriateness of a fishing technology cannot be assessed solely in terms of its higher biomass extraction from the sea. Ideally, for this higher biomass extraction to be considered truly beneficial for the parties involved the development plan which initiates this increased harvesting must also find solutions for local sociocultural problems. This is often the ignored part of the equation for development, whether it be in a fishing community or an agricultural one (much of this applies equally to agriculturalists). Short-term economic gain can often destroy the



livelihood of many individuals as overexploitation destroys local marine populations. As one Caribbean maritime researcher noted, traditional Caribbean fisheries provide more employment and place less strain on existing stocks than the newly introduced commercial ones (Berleant-Schiller 1981:224).

Two major problems in the Dominican Republic are unemployment and protein malnourishment (Bell 1981:189; Norvell and Billingsley 1971:398). If more fish are being harvested from the sea, but unemployment and protein deficiencies are increasing, then one can infer the presence of serious organizational shortcomings in the introduction of this form of development if it is meant to address these issues. It is also important to demonstrate to what market this marine produce is going. In his study of Dominican household food consumption, Philip Musgrove found that as household incomes rise less of the total income is spent on seafood. He concludes "that although the luxury seafood items such as shrimp may take a rising share of the food budget and even the total budget, the bulk of fish and shellfish consisting of dried or salted codfish and herring are increasingly replaced by meat and poultry as incomes rise (Musgrove 1985:92). If the chief market is the tourism sector, one can view this form of development as helping to promote better linkages between the primary sector and this industry, but such growth may occur at the expense of the nutritional status of the host population. In the case of agricultural food production, tourism development has been shown to have a similar negative effect on local production with fertile land being taken out of production to meet the needs of the tourism industry (c.f. Urbanowicz 1977).

### Research Methodologies

Arriving in Luperón in the beginning of 1989 planning to study whether or not tourism, as the rhetoric of the Dominican government planners implied, really could be

considered a form of development in a regional context, I found a town vastly different from the one visited previously. On the outskirts of town, two kilometers by dirt road, an ultra-modern luxury resort hotel with all the conveniences catering to an international clientele had been constructed. Responding to new market opportunities, many stores in town displayed signs advertising gift shops. Gift shops had been nonexistent in the community in 1986. Another surprise was that the Fishermen's Association had never been organized. Naturally, this destroyed my planned research methodology involving the socio-economic and sociocultural changes occurring among the fishermen in response to governmentally sponsored mechanization and tourism. A new research design had to be re-conceptualized rapidly to meet the new scenario.

The interest and confidence of the fishermen in the creation of a Fishermen's Association, with whom I had talked in 1986, had been misleading. While I had talked to several Luperón fishermen at that time, I learned in 1989 that those individuals with whom I had conversed during my previous visit had all been artisanal fishermen from the inshore fleet. The majority of them had been in favor of the development of a Fishermen's Association. However, many of the other fishermen in the port had never expressed interest in, or had actively opposed, the development plan during preliminary organizational meetings. Opponents to the development of a Fishermen's Association were unerringly the owners and captains of boats from the offshore fleet. Reviewing this information, one important issue which demanded my current attention was to examine why the Fishermen's Association failed to be adopted.

The distinction between offshore fishermen and the inshore fishermen seemed to be an organizational division worthy of investigation. Originally, plans had been made to examine the impact of a governmentally stimulated increase in the use of mechanized fishing technology and how membership in the Fishermen's Association differentiated individual members socio-economically from fishermen who were nonmembers. The more one learned about the context of local fishing, the more the importance of fleet

membership came to be recognized. My original investigation plans to study mechanization and its impact on the dependent variables of "Quality of Life" and "Marine Resources Harvested" were easily modified by substituting "Fleet Membership" for the originally conceived independent variable "Organizational Membership."

"Fleet Membership" is defined by whether the individual fisherman specializes in harvesting the inshore coastal zone near Luperón or is a member of the offshore fleet which is chiefly concerned with fishing the distant offshore banks. Membership in one or the other of these two groups will be shown to have repercussions in the type of fishing techniques used, income, marketing patterns, and the degree of perceived and material satisfaction individuals have as fishermen. The offshore and inshore fishermen, while all harvesting marine resources, view themselves as being quite distinct in their socio-economic and sociocultural lifeways.

During the course of the year I spent living in the community of Luperón many research strategies were employed. My primary research techniques was the use of participant-observation. I fished with the inshore and offshore fleets, visited *conucos* to see how gardening was done, observed the ranching methods of large land-owners, played dominos, worshipped, celebrated, and mourned with the inhabitants of Luperón. I was invited to meetings of various local organizations and welcomed into many homes. The generosity and patience displayed by members of the community to my persistent questions was magnanimous. I want to especially thank my wife Maria Lidia Pilar de Freitag for her help in collecting data, especially her insights and her data focusing on women's roles in the community, and for her ceaseless patience with my often impatient inquiries. Her intimate knowledge of the community and inhabitants, coupled with her native interpretation of local events, added a dimension to my research that I could never have obtained by myself.

Participant-observation techniques were also employed in the study of the tourists and the Luperón Beach Resort. In the course of my research I played the role of tourist, worked as a tour guide for one of the local businesses, and passed several days as a paying guest at the Luperón Beach Resort hotel. Tourists were interviewed by standardized questionnaire format and, more importantly, in open-ended interviews where much useful information on tourist perceptions and behavior was obtained.

During 1989, I conducted a business census in February and another one at the end of the year in December. A sample of the town's inhabitants were also asked questions utilizing a structured household questionnaire. I surveyed all occupied houses in the community noting their method of construction and the various types of amenities available. From the 663 occupied houses recorded in the community, a representative sample of 58 households was drawn based on housing categories composed of variations in construction materials used for floors, sidings, roof materials, and the number of rooms per house. Random sorts were made to draw households to be interviewed in a representative number per category.

In addition to working with the fishermen on various boats and recording information on harvested stocks at the town dock, the majority of Luperón's fisher folk were interviewed by structured questionnaire format (53 individuals out of a known population of 68). Efforts were made to interview all fisher folk from the offshore fleet, inshore fleet, and shore fisher folk. However, due to a number being in jail for smuggling contraband this proved to be impossible. Many members of the *luperonense* fisher folk were also interviewed using an open interview format.

Employees of the Luperón Beach Resort hotel were interviewed at length in open interview format. Members of the hotel staff from the managing director to chamber maids were included in these interviews designed to record information about the benefits and costs of working in this local industry. Over the course of 1989, 312 hotel guests were also surveyed using a structured questionnaire. With the help of the



director of the hotel and the various representatives from the tour agencies, it was possible to obtain representative samples of organized tour guests at the hotel based on nationality, tourist season, gender, and length of stay. These guests composed the majority of the hotel's clientele. Efforts were made to include nontour guests staying at the resort. However, due to problems of contacting such individuals opportunistic sampling of these individuals was necessary.

Numerous other community members had an opportunity to discuss with me their views on tourism in the community and life in Luperón. Local political, business individuals, medical professionals, etc., were interviewed at length concerning their views on the future of the community and how tourism has affected and is likely to affect the lifeways of the inhabitants. For those readers interested in learning more about the methodology employed, and the problems encountered while collecting data in the field, I direct them to Appendix A where a more detailed account is given.

During my stay I became close friends with many of the local residents and, indeed, married one. Several of these individuals, besides my wife, I interviewed regularly in more depth about local history, activities and beliefs I did not understand, and about sensitive issues that some inhabitants were reluctant to convey. I am especially indebted to these *luperonenses* and want to give special thanks. The friendships developed while in Luperón conducting research are a bond that will endure.



## CHAPTER TWO THE DILEMMAS OF DEVELOPMENT: FROM PLANTATION ECONOMY TO ENCLAVE TOURISM

### Introduction

I begin this chapter with an overview of the various theoretical approaches to development. A brief review of modernization theory, dependency theory, and the theory of articulation are necessary to understand the role tourism plays in a Caribbean socio-economic context. Emphasis is placed on the "enclave" model of development and transnationalism, with specific emphasis on their historical role in the plantation economy of the Caribbean. The similarities and differences the tourist industry has in its socio-economic structure with the host society will be reviewed in comparison to the more traditional economic activities of the region which were shaped by the historical roots linked to a plantation economy. To this end, the second part of this chapter focuses on the historical formation of the Caribbean plantation economy, its socio-economic legacies, and the traditional adaptations of rural Caribbean peoples and in particular, the Dominican people. Finally, I will provide an outline of tourism development in the Dominican Republic from an historical perspective, showing how its model of tourism development was conceptualized by policy-makers as a tool for regional growth, and the ways it has been implemented.

The arrival of Columbus in the Caribbean terminated the millennia of separate biological and cultural development of the peoples in the Americas. With catastrophic results on the demography and traditional cultural patterns of the "New World"

Amerindians, this contact initiated by Columbus also produced important cultural and biological transformations in the Old World (c.f. Crosby 1972, 1986). The year A.D. 1492 is so often used as an historical reference point to mark the beginning of the expansion of Europe outward, not just to the Americas, but to all corners of the globe. In the space of just three centuries, the European powers were to influence, if not outright control, the economies of most regions on earth and incorporate them in what Immanuel Wallerstein has labelled the "modern world system" (1974:15).

Actually, some European nations such as Portugal had already been expanding their imperial influence before this date, creating colonies and trading enclaves in the Azores, Madeiras, and the western coast of Africa decades earlier. The feudalism of medieval Europe was slowly being discarded and a new mode of production, capitalism, whose roots were already developing in parts of Europe prior to A.D. 1492, but were as yet not fully formed, began to slowly penetrate outward in the following centuries from the European continent to produce economic linkages of global scale (Wallerstein 1974; Wolf 1982). Of all geographical regions in the world, the insular Caribbean can be considered the epitome of the European colonial and imperialistic experience and, while some political and economic freedom certainly has been achieved by most Caribbean societies today, the legacy of a long colonial domination has placed severe limitations on the type and structure of economic growth in the region.

These limitations have kept the Caribbean nations producers of raw materials, both minerals and agricultural produce, while the metropolitan centers have retained continual control of the manufacturing process, leaving the Caribbean nations, by and large, at the mercy of fluctuating global prices. I argue that tourism, as another regional export, is limited by the same constraints facing the more traditional economic activities of the region, relying on unstable foreign markets and serious global competition from other poor developing nations that have similar resources to offer at their tourist destinations. As such, as long as the "Golden Horde" comes from the developed northern nations of

North America and Europe, and as long as the bulk of goods used by this industry in the region must be imported, local tourism will be dependent on factors outside the control of regional governments. In this manner, at the international level Caribbean tourism will mimic the set of economic relationships already developed for other insular products. Tourism growth, so dependent on the health of the first world nations economies, will have boom periods and suffer periods of severe stagnation. Just as the agricultural commodities such as sugar and coffee which made this region of "Plantation America" so desirable in the past, tourism, too, is forced to compete with other world regions offering the same product. If prices are lower elsewhere, or if the economies in the tourist sending nations are in decline, tourism in the Caribbean will suffer.

If one wants to understand the socio-economic structure of the present-day insular Caribbean, comprehension of the historical manipulations of the European colonial powers and their Caribbean policies from A.D. 1492 onward might provide useful insights. Europeans transformed the Caribbean basin into a production zone based on monocrop agriculture and the extraction of raw minerals. The commodities extracted from the region were then used to supply a global economy whose centers were based in the industrialized cities of northern Europe.

Beginning during the early colonial period dominated by mercantilism, and later characterized by the intensification of production during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which is a hallmark of capitalism, first the Spanish, then the Dutch, French, British, Danes, Swedes, and finally, the United States, all have sought to control and manipulate the natural and human resources of the Caribbean region. In doing so they concern themselves little with the welfare of its inhabitants, except in those cases when it affects their own political and economic interests. For these European, and later, North American nations, the Caribbean was a region to exploit, to extract wealth, to make one's treasure; however, these earnings were destined to be invested elsewhere. In this sense the region is not unique, other areas such as Africa, Asia, and mainland America also

have experienced the impact of European colonialism, but the Caribbean was the region where colonialism first came to be imposed over a vast population of people and where it endured the longest.

The foundations for the economic, political, and social growth of the Caribbean were laid on the sweat, sorrow, and deaths of millions of Amerindians, African slaves, and other indentured peoples from many different ethnic and geographic backgrounds. They were forced to produce primary sector goods for metropolitan markets located thousands of miles away and were uprooted from their homes, often against their will, and transported over large distances to provide the labor necessary to make the plantations in the Caribbean productive.

Is the political economy of the Caribbean so different today? Are the societies any less polarized or segmented by the chasm between the rich and the poor, and those of dark skin and light? The insular nations of the Caribbean still rely heavily on their mineral and agricultural exports for revenue. Tourism, that hailed and lauded industry for developing countries, whose potential economic growth statistics look so enticing, and whose net economic and social benefits are, at best, questionable, plays an interesting economic role in the region. Does it provide a viable road for economic diversification and growth, or does it mirror the other already existing economic, political, and social structures found in the Caribbean.

In relation to the highly industrialized nations of northern Europe and North America, most Caribbean nations and territories are still economically underdeveloped. V.S. Naipaul, the famous Caribbean social critic, has gone so far as to refer to the Caribbean as the "Third World's third world" (1973). Most of the Caribbean islands, with a few notable exceptions, are still heavily dependent on economic relationships with European and North American nations. Furthermore, in the Caribbean basin there is still little inter-island commerce and economic interaction globally with other developing nations is purely in its incipient stages.



Modernization Theory and Dependency Theory,  
Enclave Development, and Transnationalism

Modernization Theory

Development is a specific type of directed culture change that addresses more than increasing the biomass harvested by agriculturalists or fisher folk. The introduction of new technology does not inevitably improve the lives of the intended beneficiaries, especially if vested interests are allowed to interfere (Kottak 1978:491). Development must be viewed as a mechanism which results in the solution of local problems—technological, structural, and psychological, while safe-guarding the means of production (environment and labor). Keeping this in mind, I agree with P.I. Gomes' definition of the objectives of Caribbean development as being: (1) increased incomes for populations, accompanied by equitable distribution of the benefits derived from this income; (2) expanded production and productivity with corresponding increases in employment opportunities; and, (3) maximizing the participation of the population in decision-making processes affecting the control of the social services and the economic resources of the region (1985:xv). While Gomes was writing specifically about development in rural areas, I believe the goals he defines apply equally well throughout the society. How this development can be achieved, or if it can be achieved, has been approached from several different theoretical paradigms.

The modernization model of development promoted in the 1950s and 1960s by North American and European intellectuals viewed the world as being divided into "traditional" and "modern" societies each with contrasting sets of values which determined the behavior of individuals and level of development for societies. An inherent belief of modernization theorists was that "traditional" societies could develop through a series of



transitional stages into "modern" societies through the diffusion of values and technology. W.W. Rostow even went so far as to claim that:

It is possible to identify all societies, in their economic dimensions, as lying within one of five categories; the traditional society, the preconditions for take-off, take off, the drive to maturity, and the age of high mass-consumption. (1960:4)

Another modernization theorist, Lerner, eschewed the notion of five stages, arguing instead that societies could be considered as one of three types; "traditional," "transitional," or "modern" (1964).

Lerner proposed that societies which chose a path to modernity are societies which show "empathy" for modern ways and that these "transitional" societies "exhibit higher empathetic capacity than in any previous society" (1964:51). Relying heavily on diffusionist models, modernization theorists viewed development as a process of socio-economic and psychological change towards types of systems and values prevalent in Western Europe and North America. The evolution of these "traditional" societies into "modern" ones would follow progressive stages similar to those undertaken by western Europe and North America (Eisenstadt 1966:1).

Structural-Functionalists, such as Talcott Parsons, who strongly influenced much of the development/modernization theory of the 1950s and 1960s, viewed underdeveloped societies as not yet having achieved sufficient capital, the values and/or motivations, or the skills needed to "take-off" (1951). While rejecting unilineal evolutionary theory at one level, these early modernizationists, nonetheless, viewed development as a progression from an earlier underdeveloped society to a developed one. This was to be achieved through the diffusion of ideas and technology from the already industrialized nations. Manning Nash views "modernization" as "the growth in capacity to apply tested knowledge to all branches of production" and that a society is in a state of "modernity" when it uses "the application of science to the processes of production" (1984:6).

Modernization theorists believe that by promoting modern (i.e., Western) values through

education, by introducing democracy into underdeveloped societies, and by injecting sufficient capital into these nations, the prerequisites for developmental "take-off" can be achieved.

Those who critiqued modernization theory inevitably rejected its implicit notion that LDCs are somehow at fault for their backwardness because their socio-economic and value systems inhibit growth. The dependency model was proposed by Latin American scholars who were dissatisfied with the existing theories of modernization disseminated by North American and European economic theorists. Rather, the early Latin American dependency theorists viewed Latin America and the Caribbean region as important examples of how the modern world system, centered in western Europe and North America, had restructured geographical regions outside of Europe and North America into peripheral economic zones. The role of these peripheral zones was to supply the developed regions with the necessary primary goods, agricultural products and raw minerals, to support these developed nations' industrial complexes and feed the wage-laborers working in the manufacturing enterprises.

### Dependency Theory

Dependency theory actually originated among a group of rather conservative Latin American sociologists and economists who were strongly influenced by The Economic Development of Latin America and its Principal Problems (1950), an early work by Raúl Prebisch who was Director of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), a regional center of the United Nations which was located in Santiago, Chile. In opposition to modernization theorists, Prebisch and later Latin American dependency theorists rejected the assumption that LDCs would progress through the same stages of development as those of the Europe and United States. Dependency theorists postulated that the earlier development of capitalism in Europe and the United States had subsumed

control of the world capitalist system, making it difficult for other regions to control their own destinies. This being the case, the world was divided into metropolitan industrial centers and their satellite economies. The industrial giants of the first world limited the type of development opportunities available in the LDCs; in their own interests the already industrialized centers favored those industries and agricultural concerns which produced primary export goods needed by Europe and United States (Cardoso 1972; Cardoso and Faletto 1973; and Frank 1967). For instance, Cardoso and Faletto wrote:

It has been assumed that the peripheral countries would have to repeat the evolution of the economies of the central countries in order to achieve development. But it is clear that from its beginning the capitalist process implied an unequal relation between the central and the peripheral economies. Many "underdeveloped" economies-as is the case of the Latin America-were incorporated into the capitalist system as colonies and later as national states, and they have stayed in the capitalist system throughout their history. They remain, however, peripheral economies with particular historical paths when compared with central capitalist economies. (1972:23)

The dependency theorists believed it was the fault of the already industrialized nations that the LDCs were underdeveloped. They believed that the historical origins of dependency in the LDCs could be traced back to colonial times. During the early period of colonial expansion, the LDCs were organized by the metropolitan nations to produce food and materials for the already industrialized core centers. Thus, the LDCs came to occupy a peripheral place in the global economy. Industrial development was scorned by the colonial metropolitan centers because the colonies were to be markets for the goods produced in western Europe and North America. Within the societies of these peripheral nations the labor and excess production of the peasantry was harnessed, with the complicity of the local *comprador* elites, to meet the needs of these metropolitan nations (Frank 1967:34). Frank, one of the most renowned dependency theorists, claimed that because LDCs were so economically dependent on their trade with the metropolitan countries, and their own internal economic growth was so intrinsically linked to that of the metropolitan centers, that development of the peripheral nation's economy could only occur at the discretion of the metropolitan nations (1967).

### The Theory of Articulation

Born in a reaction to modernization theory, dependency theory was also rejected by many scholars. They felt that dependency theory placed too much blame on external economic forces, while ignoring the variety of internal modes of production which co-existed with capitalism. A mode of production is, in its simplest configuration, the combination of the forces of production with the means of production. Eric Wolf further defines a mode of production as "a specific, historically occurring set of social relations through which labor is deployed to wrest energy from nature by means of tools, skills, organization, and knowledge" (1982:75).

The early dependency theorists tended to reject the notion that capitalism could exist in conjunction with other indigenous modes of production. Both Wallerstein and Frank claimed that the penetration of capitalism was complete in all societies of the world. Certainly from a global perspective, capitalism is the dominant mode of production in the modern world system. However, other social scientists have documented that several modes of production can exist, and even thrive, side-by-side with capitalism.

Anthropologists such as the French Structural-Marxists, Dupré and Rey (1973), and Meillassoux (1972) demonstrated that in LDCs capitalism has not yet subsumed all other modes of production. Rather, various modes of production often can be linked with the capitalist mode of production in a symbiotic relationship. In his work in Peru, Norman Long describes four main noncapitalist modes of production existing with capitalism. Long wrote of his work in Peru that "several modes (both capitalist and non-capitalist) will normally be found to co-exist within the same agricultural zone" (1977:97).

Proponents of the theory of articulation accept the notion that capitalism is the dominant mode of production throughout the world. However, the fact that other modes of production have successfully resisted the complete penetration of capitalism, has provoked several theoretical interpretations as to why. Long's thesis was that co-



existence, at least temporarily, was mutually beneficial for those involved in various modes of production:

the existence of other modes of production (both capitalist and non-capitalist) affords the peasant family operating predominantly under a smallholder system the means by which it can acquire supplementary income or additional resources to cover various production and non-production expenditure. On the other hand, the *hacendado* or capitalist farmer also benefits from this arrangement for the continuance of a smallholder mode ensures that he can obtain a supply of temporary peasant labour when he needs it. (1977:101)

Long's thesis is supported by the work of Bryan R. Roberts. Also examining rural modes of production in Peru, Roberts concludes that the partial penetration of capitalism allowed a large share of the reproduction cost of the labor force to be the burden of the workers themselves, thereby reducing the costs to the plantation and mine owners (1976:100).

Long pointed out that the theory of articulation is particularly useful in understanding the multi-structural nature of developing countries' economies (1977:101). Eric Wolf criticizes dependency theorists because they ignore the social transformations peripheral regions undergo during the penetration of capitalism as being relatively unimportant and subsumed into finite definitions of those who produce surplus, "proletarians," and those who take this surplus for their own gain - "capitalists" (Wolf 1982:297). Both Mintz and Wolf argue that it is important not to ignore the social environment that markets and capital naturally operate within (Wolf and Mintz 1957:381).

Roberts says that the central flaw of the dependency school is the following:

One of the persistent weaknesses of dependency theory has been its inability to take into account adequately the internal processes of capitalist transformation in Latin America. These internal processes, though determined, in the last instance, by the movements of international capital, possess their own logic of development and account for some of the contradictions in the contemporary political and economic situation of Latin America. (1976:126)

This observation should not be limited to just Latin America. Studies in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean, too, have shown that the penetration of capitalism is far from complete in

many nations. That the ultimate goal of capitalist development will be the elimination of all other modes of production may be true, but it is unlikely to occur in the foreseeable future. For now, improving the benefits derived by rural populations from capitalism, and minimizing the dislocations caused by its penetration into existing social formations, should be of central importance to development planners.

### Transnationalism and Enclave Industries

Scholars rejecting the views of dependency theorists claim the argument that countries are "dependent" on others says little about the type of exploitation, or the benefits derived, from this "dependency." For instance, it is clear that Canada relies heavily on trade with the United States to keep its economy functioning, but it is certainly a developed country. In a recently published book by Robert Reich, The Work of Nations (1991), the author argues that economics and its role within the nation-state has transformed noticeably since the 1960s. In the international market place, the past philosophy of competition was that "one nation's economic success was sure to come at the expense of another's" (Reich 1991:29). However, this philosophy is changing with the growth of the large multinational conglomerates who know no national boundaries and have little to gain financially by identifying strongly with nationalistic ideology, except to cement the loyalty of consumers who still identify a company as producing an "American," "German," or "Japanese" product, and to utilize national trade laws to maximize their own profits.

Reich argues that the future of business is in consolidation and transnationalism in the realm of research and production. He believes, however, sales will still be promoted within a nationalistic framework:

That such institutions are becoming decentralized webs of contractors, subcontractors, licensees, franchisees, partnerships, and other temporary alliances-spun by small groups of strategic brokers-has not dimmed consumer loyalty, because consumers are largely unaware of the

transformation. A product with a GE trademark is assumed to be 'made' by General Electric in the traditional sense of GE employees under the control of GE managers in GE factories. The reassurance itself is a tradeable commodity. (Reich 1991:106)

In today's global economy, a product frequently is a combined effort of many individuals and companies working together. While in numerous countries national governments levy tariffs, stipulate quotas on foreign imports, and still attempt to bolster national products in the face of stiff foreign competition, the global market place is becoming dominated by corporations which are difficult to identify as belonging to one nationality.

The thesis of transnationalism is that within the national economies of various countries, developed and underdeveloped, a small elite group of society is emerging which is reaping the majority of benefits derived from economic growth.

Transnationalism can be viewed as a neo-dependency theory, whereby certain segments of each society are better able to integrate into the modern world system, and they benefit from this relationship. Other classes in these societies are left outside the system completely, or because of a lack of education, are reduced to performing only the most menial of jobs in an increasingly technical work-place.

It is interesting to note that Osvaldo Sunkel, an early proponent of dependency theory, and Robert Reich, trained as a neo-classical economist, hold many of the same views on the rise of transnationals and their importance in the world economic system. Sunkel believes that the rise of transnationals has resulted in the following:

From such a perspective of the global system, apart from the distinction between developed and underdeveloped countries, components of importance can be observed:

- a) a complex of activities, social groups and regions in different countries which conform to the developed part of the global system and which are closely linked transnationally through many concrete interests as well as by similar styles, ways and levels of living and cultural affinities;
- b) a national component of activities, social groups and regions partially or totally excluded from the national developed part of the global system and without any links with similar activities, groups and regions of other countries. (1973:146)

Sunkel may be overstating the issue of isolation, since even the most isolated rural community will have some interaction with the national elites, but his argument that benefits from increased interaction with a global economy will not be equally distributed throughout society cannot be denied. Furthermore, he argues that the growth of transnationals, and the "transnationalization" of segments of LDC societies, results in the "improvement of wages of qualified personnel and a relative stagnation or decline in the wages of unskilled labor" (Sunkel 1973:144).

The relationship between transnationalism, multinational corporations, and enclave industries is a close one. A preferred model for multinational corporations to conduct business in LDCs is to set up business as an enclave industry. Enclave industries are foreign owned enterprises utilizing local resources and labor, often paying the national government little more than a low annual fee for leasing these resources, and having virtually no other structural connections with the host government. Raw materials or manufactured goods produced by these industries are for export, not internal consumption.

Caribbean nations, such as the Dominican Republic, have played hosts to many enclave industries. With huge financial resources to draw from multinational corporations gain enormous economic advantages from LDCs and often give the host nation little in return except what is necessary to mollify the local officials needed to support their local operations. During the twentieth century, enclave industries emerged in the Caribbean dealing principally with mineral-export and sugar production. However, recently tourism has been introduced as a form of enclave industry in parts of the Caribbean. The Club Med (Mediterranee) tourist resort with an all inclusive vacation package at Punta Cana, Dominican Republic is but one example of tourism where hosts and guests never meet except in the confines of the worker-guest relationship.

A perfect example of an enclave industry was the Gulf and Western Corporation industrial complex in the Dominican Republic. The Gulf and Western Corporation's La



Romana sugar plantation and subsidiary industries in the Dominican Republic were governed as a State within a State. La Romana was a tax-free zone administered, policed, and physically separated from the rest of the country by barb-wire fences and company guards. Dominicans and Haitians working within the La Romana complex had little ability to organize and the Dominican government found it virtually impossible to collect its fair share of taxes from Gulf and Western (Black 1986a:67). Gulf and Western was not the only culprit. They had purchased their Dominican interests from the South Puerto Rico Sugar Company in 1967, which had formerly run their operation in much the same manner.

Girvan, in his study of the petroleum and bauxite industries, found that the economic organization of these industries within the Caribbean contributed to "(i) economic dependence, (ii) the enclave nature of the industry, and (iii) the failure of the industry to generate transformation in the host economy, even where the State succeeds in capturing a large part of the surplus which it generates" (1973:19). The subsidiary firm in the Caribbean [of a multinational corporation] is much more dependent on the parent firm, and has its principal transactions with it, rather than with the host society outside its enclave (Girvan 1973:20). The very nature of the enclave industry is that it has little integration with the host society. Demas writes "that development, if it means anything, means that production-functions are constantly changing and that capital is being constantly accumulated in all sectors and all regions" (1965:14). Furthermore, he states that since the enclave economy does not distribute its returns among all sectors of society this type of economic system cannot be considered as a form of development (Demas 1965:14).

Similarities between the enclave structure of mineral-export industries in the Caribbean and tourism industries is evident. In LDCs, much of the tourist industry's growth has been sponsored by "large-scale companies based in north America and western Europe, and the bulk of such tourist expenditure is retained by the transnational companies

involved" (Urry 1990:64). Bargaining from positions of strength, these transnational companies seek vulnerability and will opt to settle in those nations which give them the most beneficial treatment or from whom they can exact the greatest advantage. Thus, the host society's benefits from tourism are frequently minimized and local tourism becomes typified by an enclave structure. Demas warned Caribbean nations against relying too heavily on tourism as the sole road to development as early as 1965:

It is true that tourism is highly income-elastic, but it depends so largely on whim and fashion that it would not be prudent in countries where it is possible to develop manufactures to place hopes entirely or largely on this industry. . . . In my judgment tourism does not develop the capacity to transform (*all sectors of society*) to the same extent. On the other hand, there may well be certain small countries which have great natural advantages for tourism and little for manufacturing industry, and in such places the concentration on tourism may be the only feasible alternative. (1965:60)

The Caribbean is one of the least diversified economic regions in the Americas. Dependence on monocrop agriculture and the mining of a few minerals, little arable land devoted to the production of subsistence crops for the national population, high population densities, few manufacturing industries, and the reliance on imported fuel have limited the development of the region. There are individuals that believe the Caribbean will always be economically dependent on other regions of the world and, because of this, development opportunities are limited. Girvan has written there is an "implicit view that structural dependence in the Caribbean is conditioned by some 'natural' variable such as size, and is therefore inescapable to some degree," and that this viewpoint "has exerted a powerful influence over economic thought in the region" (1973:6). Certainly, for some of the smallest island states of the Caribbean tourism is one of the few options available to national planners. However, for the larger countries in the region it is but one possible choice among many available. So why has alternative economic diversification been so difficult to achieve for those larger nations in the region? To understand this issue important historical and cultural factors must be clarified so that the present day structure of the Caribbean nations and their relationship within a modern

world system is recognized as part of a legacy of five centuries of exploitation by those nations which are now releasing the "Golden Horde" to go forth on their hedonistic pilgrimage of pleasure seeking.

The Caribbean and its Political Economy:  
Living in the Shadow of its Colonial Past

The Contact Period

The Caribbean has undergone a complete transformation during the past five hundred years since Columbus first made landfall somewhere, as yet not precisely determined, in the Bahamian archipelago (Wilson 1990:43). Some knowledge of the history of the Caribbean region, and how this history was largely influenced by decision-makers thousands of miles away across the Atlantic in Europe, is useful to understanding many of the problems facing the region today. The Caribbean was the first region in the Americas to be conquered. Its lands were totally divested from the ownership of its original inhabitants by their annihilation. The almost complete extermination of the indigenous peoples permitted the European colonizers "to work out the problems of settlement, adjustment, and development to a very large degree *as if the Antilles were empty lands* [author's italics]" (Mintz 1971:23). These lands were divided by the conquering European powers who often bitterly contested ownership among themselves, with some islands and their inhabitants often exchanging political overseers several times during their colonial history, as the balance of power in Europe shifted over the centuries.

Of all the indigenous inhabitants of the Caribbean at that time of conquest, of which three groups are clearly identified—the Taino, the Guanahatabey (also called the Ciboney), and the Island-Carib, only a few remaining Carib now living on Dominica and the transplanted Black Carib of the Caribbean littoral of Central America, survived the assault on their islands by the rapacious conquistadors and colonists coming from Europe

(Deagan 1988:193). In A.D.1492, when Columbus first landed on Hispaniola, the Taino were a densely settled, sedentary stratified society (Deagan 1988:196). Today, of those Taino living in the Greater Antilles at the time of contact, we have only a cultural legacy of archaeological sites, some of their vocabulary and place names adopted by the colonists, and the continuing cultivation of many of their traditional crops which were incorporated into the cuisine of their European and African successors. These hapless Amerindians were the first victims of Caribbean colonialism. According to some scholars, as many as several million are believed to have died in the first two decades of contact on Hispaniola alone (Sauer 1966:200-201). To quote Eric Williams, "it has been said of the Spanish conquistadors that first they fell on their knees, and then they fell on the aborigines" (1970:30).

Not only the Amerindians of the Caribbean were negatively affected demographically by the arrival of the Europeans, the indigenous ecology of the region has also been transformed by the colonial experience. While Old World diseases played a significant role in the elimination of Caribbean indigenous population, introduced plants, animal species, and human endeavors have altered the ecology of the Caribbean dramatically from that first encountered by the Spaniards in the late fifteenth century. The virgin forests have all but disappeared to supply timber and make room for agriculture. In their place can be found flowing fields of sugar-cane in the lowland plantation zones, coffee plantations, small farms, and ever diminishing secondary growth forests in the uplands. On those islands most densely populated, hillside erosion is a major problem, washing away vital topsoils and further diminishing the amount of arable land available for the small farmer whose produce is so important in helping feed the local populations.



### The Caribbean as a Culture Area

Anthropologists have long argued whether or not the Caribbean should have the distinction of being classified as a culture area separate from Latin America. One of the classic arguments against it being studied at all by anthropologists is that its indigenous people, the traditional focus of the ethnologist, have long been vanquished, with the exception of the few thousand Caribs previously mentioned living on Dominica. As fewer and fewer hunting/gathering and tribal peoples remain in the world, the focus of the anthropologists has naturally broadened to include the study of peasantries and their role in a larger political entity, the nation-state. But should the poorer rural peoples of the Caribbean actually be defined as members of a peasantry, or are they better classified as some type of hybrid, neither members of a peasantry, nor fully members of a rural proletariat class within a larger capitalist system?

What becomes apparent as one studies the Caribbean societies and cultures is that they share many similar cultural traits, even though they have had different colonial masters, speak different languages, and are politically distinct entities. Notwithstanding the important ecological ones which made this region so attractive for monocrop agriculture, this can be attributed to several factors. They are: (1) the social legacy of the plantation economy with its attendant stratified local society; (2) similar historical processes—albeit in different historical periods; and, (3) a system of subservient international political-economic relationships developed during a long colonial history when these societies were considered only important for the primary export goods they sent to European metropolitan markets. With the coming of political independence in the latter part of the twentieth century, most Caribbean nations are still dependent on this trade to supply the majority of their manufactured goods, and rely on the traditional primary sector production of agricultural and mineral products of their nations to pay for these imported commodities.

The cultures of the Caribbean are examples of historical syncretistic development. Even though European cultures had political control, the cultural milieu of the region has cultural traits which can be traced to Africa, Europe, Asia, Oceania, and, of course, the Americas. This is not to say that Caribbean societies are merely reflections of other societies; rather, that many cultural attributes surviving the harsh trans-Atlantic journey in the holds of slave-runners full of human cargo from Africa, on the ships full of indentured servants from Europe, India, or Java, and even those introduced from Europe by members of the plantocracy, were "creolized" in the face of the particular problems within Caribbean societies. Furthermore, many Amerindian cultural practices, especially agricultural crops and farming practices, were incorporated into the lifeways of their African and European successors and continue to be practiced today (Mintz 1985:136).

#### The Caribbean and Plantation America

One of the dominant forces which shaped the structure of present-day Caribbean societies was their long association with plantation production. The plantation system determined, to some degree, what cultural traits were to be found in Caribbean colonial societies (Mintz 1985:128). The plantation was a highly organized system which led Edgar T. Thompson to refer to it as "military" agriculture in his excellent book on the plantation system called Plantation Societies, Race Relations, and the South: The Regimentation of Populations (1975). It was the plantation, with its need for reliable labor supplies, control of the most fertile lands within easy access to local ports, an international market for its commodities, and its demand for large-scale capital investment, which helped shape the socio-economic structure of the insular Caribbean into what Charles Wagley has called "Plantation-America" (1957:12).

Wagley divides the New World into three distinct cultural spheres: Euro-America, Indo-America, and Plantation-America. Euro-America is centered in both the northern

and southern temperate zones of the hemisphere and is pre-dominantly European in its cultural composition. Indo-America, located from Mexico to northern Chile along the Andean cordilleras, is populated by peoples of Indian and mestizo heritage and culturally is an area where Amerindian culture has contributed significantly to present cultures (Wagley 1957:4-5). Wagley's definition of Plantation-America is a broad cultural sphere geographically contained within the following regions:

from about midway up the coast of Brazil into the Guianas, along the Caribbean coast, throughout the Caribbean itself, and into the United States. It is characteristically coastal; not until the nineteenth century did the way of life of the Plantation culture sphere penetrate far into the mainland interior, and then only in Brazil and the United States. This area has an environment which is characteristically tropical (except in the southern United States) and lowland. (1957:5)

In his definition of the Plantation-America cultural sphere, Wagley delineates some basic features common throughout this region: (1) plantation systems and emphasis on monocrop export agriculture, (2) multi-racial composition, (3) social stratification based on rigid class distinctions, (4) a weak community structure, (5) a peasantry primarily of Afro-American descent replacing the Amerindian peoples, and (6) prevalence of the matrifocal type family. Moreover, he outlines other common cultural features which he refers to as an "incomplete list": (1) a similarity of food crops, (2) reliance on slash and burn horticulture, (3) local markets and women marketeers (the higgler or huckster), (4) similar culinary tastes, (5) basic commonalities in musical patterning, (6) African derived folklore, and (7) Afro-American religious sects (1957:9-11).

Wagley does not deny that this is only a broadly based list of cultural traits found ranging widely throughout the cultural sphere of Plantation America. In his seminal article he notes that there are definite regional variations which should be explored further by social scientists:

It is, of course, a fact that there are important differences between the southern United States, the Caribbean islands of Spanish, French, Dutch, Danish and English colonial backgrounds, and northern Brazil. Detailed local studies are obviously necessary and will provide the only basis for understanding the distinctive societies and cultures within this



larger culture sphere. Yet, our local studies must be seen in relationship to this larger sphere which historically, and in the present, shares certain basic institutions and cultural patterns. (Wagley 1957:11)

Caribbean tourism, as any other sort of cultural phenomena within the sphere of Plantation America, would be likely to exhibit certain features with a wide-ranging regional patterning, while displaying certain culturally differentiated variations at the local level.

The Caribbean, states Sidney Mintz, should more accurately be termed a "societal area," rather than a "cultural area" (Mintz 1971:19-20). His position is that societies in the Caribbean "share many more social-structural features than they do cultural features," and the Pan-Caribbean cultural attributes can be considered the result of "parallels of economic and social structure and organization, the consequence of lengthy and rather rigid colonial rule" (Mintz 1971:20). Mintz places emphasis on the similarity, or parallel historical processes, each island underwent as part of a general colonial experience, rather than the fact that many of the islands are interconnected by shared, historically related, *cultures* [author's italics] (1971:20). He lists the following nine features which exhibit commonalty throughout the Caribbean:

(1) lowland, subtropical, insular ecology; (2) the swift extirpation of native populations; (3) the early definition of the islands as a sphere of European overseas agricultural capitalism, based primarily on the sugar-cane, African slaves, and the plantation system; (4) the concomitant development of insular social structures in which internally differentiated local community organization was slight, and nationally class groupings usually took on a bipolar form, sustained by overseas domination, sharply differentiated access to land, wealth, and political power, and the use of physical differences as status markers; (5) the continuous interplay of plantations and small-scale yeoman agriculture, with accompanying social-structural effects; (6) the successive introduction of massive new "foreign" populations into the lower sectors of insular social structures, under conditions of extremely restricted opportunities for upward economic, social, or political mobility; (7) the prevailing absence of any ideology of national identity that could serve as a goal for mass acculturation; (8) the persistence of colonialism, and of the colonial ambiance, longer than in any other area outside of western Europe; (9) a high degree of individualization—particularly economic individualization—as an aspect of Caribbean social organization. (Mintz 1971:20)



Mintz specifies that some of the nine features he lists "might be considered 'causes' and others 'consequences'," but he makes no attempt in this article to determine "causality" among the features cited (1971:21). However, later in his career Mintz clearly agrees with Wallerstein's view that the Caribbean was an important part of a "modern world system" after its "discovery" in A.D. 1492. Its economic role was to be a peripheral region producing a surplus of agricultural commodities for consumption by inhabitants of the world system's core region (western Europe and later North America) and the dominant economic pattern of this production was the plantation (1977).

### Sugar and Labor in Caribbean Development

It was the Spanish who first introduced both sugar-cane and plantation production to the Caribbean (Mintz 1977:255). After gold began to become harder to obtain in Santo Domingo, and because there was a growing market for sugar in Europe in the beginning of the sixteenth century, production of this commodity was adopted by many of the Spanish colonists of Hispaniola. Production of sugar was labor intensive. Just as this crop became economically important on Hispaniola, the Spanish colonialists were forced to abandon first the *repartimiento* system, and then the *encomienda* system. Both of these systems had bestowed on individual Spaniards the right of trusteeship overseeing Indian labor, religious instruction, and tribute delivery. Organized by these systems to form large labor pools, the Spaniards used Amerindian labor until the catastrophic decline of the Amerindian population made finding alternative labor supplies a necessity (c.f. Moya Pons 1971; 1977).

The labor situation became acute in the Caribbean during the sixteenth century. By the middle of the sixteenth century imported labor became imperative for the well-being of the Spanish colonies in the Caribbean. The production of sugar necessitated having a sufficient supply of laborers and by A.D. 1518 the early plantations of Santo Domingo

began to rely on enslaved Africans as the principal source of labor for the plantations (Mintz 1977:255). Why were African slaves selected as laborers for the Caribbean plantation economy? Wallerstein provides a logical argument:

Because of the exhaustion of the supply of laborers indigenous to the region of the plantations, because Europe needed a source of labor from a reasonably well-populated region that was accessible and relatively near the region of usage. But it had to be from a region that was outside its world-economy so that Europe could feel unconcerned about the economic consequences for the breeding region of wide-scale removal of manpower as slaves. Western Africa filled the bill best. (1974:89)

A plantation, in order to function, demanded a large supply of capital for land and technology, as well as a reliable source of cheap labor. Both Mintz (1974) and Williams (1970) have shown that the relationships between the subjugated Afro-American peoples and the dominant white Caribbean plantocracy exhibited a wide range of variation. This differentiation of slavery systems was based not on Protestant North European cultural values versus Catholic South European values as Tannenbaum postulated (c.f. Tannenbaum 1947). Rather, this differentiation could be attributed to the particular demands of a plantation economy at a particular level of economic intensification. William Law Mathieson, whose research was conducted earlier than Tannenbaum's, gave little credence to the hypothesis that the severity of slave systems could be predicted by the existence of either northern or southern European cultural values:

Spanish slavery in the West Indies was a century older and lasted considerably longer than that of any other European power. It began and it ended as probably the worst in the world; but there was an intermediate period, happily of great length, during which its reputation for mildness was fully deserved. (Mathieson 1926:34)

Slavery should not be considered as a phenomenon which manifests itself in one form. Its historical usage is varied and found in a range of social formations (Mintz 1977:257). The original labor force in the Caribbean came not from Africa, but from Europe (Williams 1970:95). In both the Spanish, and later, the British and French colonies, convicts and indentured laborers were the first immigrants to the region.

Contemporary opinion at the time hoped that these European indentured laborers would fulfill the needs of the emerging plantation systems. It was the increasing industrialization and intensification of the plantation system, producing sugar, coffee, cotton, tobacco, and indigo, which transformed the unfree labor force of the islands into mere chattel. In the Caribbean there was undeniably a "linkage between the prevailing type of economy and the general treatment of the slaves" (Hoetink 1985:62).

Sugar had been introduced into the Caribbean by Columbus on his second voyage in A.D. 1493. Initially, Spanish sugar found a welcome market in Europe and by A.D. 1518 the Spanish colonies of the Caribbean were producing sugar as their main commodity for export. It is interesting to note that the sixteenth century was the only period in the history of Santo Domingo when the number of slaves was greater than the number of freeman. For instance, in A.D. 1546 there were approximately 5,000 freeman and 12,000 slaves (Moya Pons 1986:46). This corresponds with the colony of Santo Domingo's early boom period when its major export commodity sugar was in great demand in Europe. Sugar's profitability allowed for the vast expenditures necessary to maintain an economic system in Santo Domingo based on slavery. However, by the mid-sixteenth century Portuguese sugar produced in Brazil was being sold much cheaper in Europe and sugar production on Hispaniola began to decline. Brazil's soil fertility, proximity to a cheap supply of labor (West Africa), and shorter distance to the European markets allowed it to out-compete Spanish sugar. The Portuguese were able to control the European sugar market for the latter half of the sixteenth century.

The loss of Hispaniola's dominance in the sugar trade was, in part, the result of the Spanish Crown's desire to monopolize all the trade with its Caribbean colonies. Legally, the Crown held the exclusive right to control trade and shipping with the colonies. It taxed all merchandise sailing to and from the Caribbean excessively and the only European port legally open to exports from the Spanish colonies in the Caribbean was Seville (Williams 1971:54). Another important factor in the decline of Hispaniola's sugar

industry was that the Portuguese controlled the slave trade. Prices for slaves were much higher for Spanish planters than Portuguese, which resulted in higher production costs for Spanish sugar. The Spanish form of mercantilism placed a burden on the struggling Spanish planters of the Greater Antilles. As Eric Williams aptly put it, "the Spaniard cut off his nose to spite his face" (1971:52).

It was not until the French and British established colonies in the Lesser Antilles during the early seventeenth century that the Caribbean sugar industry again gained ascendancy in the world market. At the time the sugar producing area of Brazil was undergoing a power struggle between Dutch and Portuguese colonists. Both the Dutch and Portuguese wanted control of the rich sugar-cane lands of northeastern Brazil and, while both parties were occupied fighting one another, sugar production in the region was drastically reduced.

The first British and French immigrants trying to develop colonies in the seventeenth century Caribbean introduced an economic and political system which differed little from that found existing at the time in their home countries. The first colonists were yeoman farmers cultivating small plots of land in a manner similar to the production methods they had previously used in Europe. At first these early British and French colonists tried to cultivate tobacco as a cash crop. Tobacco, a plant native to the New World, had been introduced into Europe by Columbus. Its use had spread throughout Europe despite various authorities attempts to curtail its use. Produced on relatively small farms, the labor needs of the tobacco farmer were quite different from those required for the production of sugar.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the British and French colonists in the Lesser Antilles also tried cultivating cotton as a potential cash crop. Unfortunately, the European market for both Caribbean tobacco and cotton was slight (Dunn 1972:53). Due to the limited size of the Lesser Antilles, after the initial period of colonization by the British and French when land was easy to obtain, it became progressively more difficult



to recruit freemen as volunteers to go to the colonies. Dunn, in his study of the early British plantation system, observed that while land was available volunteers were easily recruited as laborers for Barbados (the first British colony in the Caribbean). These laborers hoped, upon finishing their obligations, to have a chance of obtaining their own tracts of land:

These young people bound themselves to four or five years of labor in the tropics for the adventure of it, or in hopes of getting farms of their own. Barbados servants were supposed to receive ten acres apiece when their indentures expired, but there was soon no land for them. Their choice was to try one of the less congested Leeward Islands, or return home, or stay as wage laborers in Barbados. (1972:53)

These British and French "interlopers" were forced to turn, just as the Spanish had done before them, to involuntary sources of labor. Indentured servants, or *engagés*, as they were referred to in the French colonies, became harder to recruit. To offset this shortage, more convicts were "barbadoed," or sentenced, to servitude in the Caribbean tropics. Also, another method of recruitment of labor was to kidnap victims from coastal regions of Europe and ship them to the Caribbean colonies where they were forced to work in the fields cultivating tobacco and, later, sugar-cane (Williams 1970:96-98).

By 1650, there was a glut of tobacco on the European market. The quality of Caribbean tobacco was not favorably received in Europe. Compared to the quality of tobacco supplied by the colonies in North America, Caribbean tobacco was of poor quality (Dunn 1972:53). Initially, the populace of the British and French colonies were not composed of big planters; rather, they were composed of small farmers living a subsistence based economy (Dunn 1972:49). Between 1640 and 1643, the production of sugar rapidly became the pre-eminent cash crop in Barbados. Dunn lists several reasons why it was adopted so rapidly by the landowners of the colony:

The island was (and is) far better suited to sugar than tobacco; once the planters discovered the knack, they grew cane of high quality and bountiful yield. The timing was perfect, for no other Caribbean island as yet produced sugar for the European market, and Brazil was a battleground between the Dutch and the Portuguese. The

Dutch obligingly showed the English how to process the cane, supplied them with African slaves on easy terms, and sold their product in Amsterdam at generous prices, because sugar was still a very scarce and much desired commodity. (1972:62)

With the introduction of new methods for its planting and rendering introduced by the Dutch in the 1640s, sugar became a highly profitable commodity. Tobacco and cotton were quickly relegated into second-class products, only fit to be raised on those lands not considered suitable for the production of sugar-cane. Tobacco would hold its own in North America. There, as time went by, its production would become intensified and it, too, would become a plantation crop dependent on the use of slave labor (Wolf 1982:196). However, in the British and French Caribbean by 1643, King Sugar had arrived in the region as the economic mainstay.

#### Sugar Hegemony and Alternative Development

The introduction of the plantation system seriously constrained the growth of alternative economic activities (Mintz 1985:129). On the smaller islands, such as Barbados, where land was limited, the growing power of the local sugar plantocracy, frequently financed with capital raised back in England, bought up most of the remaining free lands making emigration necessary for all subsequent generations seeking lands (Dunn 1972:88). For the most part, this resulted in the European yeomen being quickly replaced by a few large landowners who actively consolidated the best lands on each island into large plantations. On those plantations that permitted slaves to cultivate their own gardens could be found the origins of today's Caribbean "peasantry." Mintz prefers to refer to these slaves cultivating small plots as members of a Caribbean "proto-peasantry," and it was this small-scale slave production that replaced the earlier peasant tradition of the European yeoman in all but a few of the French and British islands (1985:134).

From its conception in the sixteenth century the plantation system of the Caribbean, with its reliance on the production of primary sector goods, was inherently dependent on the fluctuations of the world economic system whose core was located in Europe and North America. Eric Williams, the late Caribbean historian and Prime Minister of Trinidad, also pointedly blamed the plantation system, with its historical influence over all sectors of insular society, as responsible for the existing social structures found in the region today and for existing race relations. He outlined three determinants of race-relations in the Caribbean: (1) economic [property-owner versus laborer]; (2) political [declaring that the State's function was to protect existing property relationships in each society]; and, (3) the prevalent theory of race at the time (Williams 1957:54-55).

Even in his early writings Williams clearly placed determinacy on the hegemony of the plantation system and its reliance on imported labor as an explanation for the social features found in the region today. He argued strongly that the long hegemony of the plantation system produced a region economically dependent on the fluctuations of external markets. For this, he was harshly criticized by Tannenbaum:

There is an implicit indifference to tradition, custom and *mores* (his italics), and a sort of denial of the place of customary law and the role of religious belief in the way men deal with one another that I find difficult to adjust to the things I know. There is a theory of human nature imbedded in this paper and other things that Dr. Williams has written which seems to me to be wrong. The dubious assumptions of social malleability, of the easy bending of cultures, and of human fluidity and individual separateness - as if man stood outside the local society, the group, the caste, the order, the guild, the church, the family, or as if these were of little importance to the individual or the society in which they occurred. . . .

This is but one intellectual quarrel I have with Dr. Williams. There are others, especially the seeming acceptance of the theory of economic determinism as the infallible tool of social investigations and interpretation. This is not the place to elaborate on the thesis except to say that no unilateral theory of social causation is acceptable as the explanation of the infinitely complex and contradictory features that describe man in his dealing with others and with nature. (1957:61)



What Tannenbaum objected to in Williams's writings was his emphasis on the dependent economic relations the Caribbean societies had with the metropolitan centers and his belief that this relationship was responsible for the internal structure of the insular societies. Tannenbaum may have been correct to argue that Williams's focus ignored inter-island variations. However, as a culture area the Caribbean was transformed completely, unlike any other region in the world, by the colonial experience. Under colonialism the region's central purpose was to produce raw materials for the industrial centers located in Europe and, as such, was highly dependent on the metropolitan centers for most manufactured goods and even many of the foodstuffs consumed on the islands.

Historically, the Caribbean islands were primarily agricultural enterprises devoted to fulfilling the economic objectives of outsiders and their own development never took precedence over the needs of the European markets (Mintz 1985:138). The planters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries quickly realized that it was more profitable to import food than to take valuable sugar lands and use them to produce foodstuffs to feed the slaves. The "salt-fish and tinned-milk tradition" in the Caribbean is unequivocally linked to the reliance on a plantation economy (Williams 1970:449). The modern Caribbean countries have yet to met the agricultural production needs of even basic foodstuffs:

Since the best lands were used in the production of export crops, the production of other foodstuffs for local consumption was relegated to poorer lands in small parcels which were highly dispersed. The consequences were low production at high cost, and high marketing costs occasioned by the low volumes moved over long distances. Despite the longer distances travelled by foodstuffs from Europe and North American markets, the high volumes and transport systems (water transportation), together with low-cost production in the originating country, made relatively cheaper imported foodstuffs. (McIntosh and Manchew 1985:221)

This lack of insular agricultural diversity has resulted in the region being a net importer of foodstuffs. As regional investigations have concluded, this plantation legacy has also been partly to blame for various health problems linked to diet in the region such as



energy-protein malnutrition, anaemia, obesity and diseases related such as diabetes and hypertension (McIntosh and Manchew 1985:213-217).

The Caribbean planters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had enormous economic and political power and used this clout to influence their governments in Europe to pass favorable legislation protecting their commodities and trading privileges in the face of competition from non-national sources. This was the heyday of mercantilism. With the coming of the nineteenth century, and the emancipation of the Caribbean slaves, the historical development of the plantation system had structured the societies of the region into highly polarized class-based systems where little upward mobility was allowed. The majority of newly emancipated slaves, having no specific occupational skills, had few opportunities aside from becoming wage laborers on the plantations where they formerly had been slaves or to find jobs in the few urban centers. For the lucky few who had managed to save some money, the desire to purchase a small parcel of land and be one's own boss was a dream they aspired to make a reality. These freedmen who managed to purchase small tracts of land became one of the major sources for the "reconstituted" peasantries in the Caribbean (Mintz 1974:146).

### The Caribbean Peasantry

The term "peasant" in the Caribbean, for obvious historical reasons, must be defined differently than in other parts of the Americas. The Amerindians in the Caribbean had not developed beyond a chiefdom level of political organization at the time of contact and, shortly after their initial contact with Europeans, they were all but exterminated. The rise of a plantation system throughout the insular Caribbean, and the associated lack of arable lands not sequestered by the planter elite on the smaller islands, inhibited the growth of an independent peasant class. The possibility of escape for the slaves on the smaller islands were few. Malingering, induced abortions, sporadic revolts and other forms of

resistance to enslavement occurred with a high degree of frequency on these islands; however, for the slaves on the Lesser Antilles there was little opportunity to develop their own economic patterns independent from the control of the plantation economy.

On the larger islands such as Hispaniola, Jamaica, Cuba, and on the Caribbean mainland colonies such as Suriname and Guyana, slaves would often run off and join the bands of *cimarrones*, or maroons as they were called by the British, which were groups of runaway slaves and their offspring. These bands lived an autonomous existence in the interior of the larger islands and in the hinterlands of the mainland colonies during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They survived by hunting, horticulture, and, on occasion, raiding (Price 1973:10). Living always in fear of being attacked by the white colonialists, these bands became experts at guerrilla warfare (Price 1973:7).

During the eighteenth century, both the Jamaican Maroons and the Suriname Bush Negroes successfully outfought colonial militias sent to conquer them. Ultimately, the colonists were forced to come to terms with these maroon bands (Williams 1970:198). While these maroon bands won their own autonomy, the price for their freedom was regulated at the expense of the Africans still enslaved in the colonies, and by agreeing not to threaten the plantocracy's economic dominance. The Maroons of Jamaica could plant any crop except sugar-cane, and both the Maroons of Jamaica and the Bush Negroes of Suriname agreed to help colonial authorities in returning escaped slaves. Furthermore, they signed a treaty agreeing to come to the aid of the colonialists whenever new slave insurrections occurred (Williams 1970:198-199). Perhaps, the beginnings of the Caribbean peasantry were not to be found only in the heritage of the Maroons.

The origins of the Caribbean peasantry could also be traced to the edges of every plantation where slaves cultivated garden plots. These proto-peasants, as they are referred to by Mintz, were not freeman, but slaves (1974). With the emancipation of the slaves throughout the Caribbean during the nineteenth century, a Caribbean peasantry did not suddenly spring forth where it had never existed before. The Caribbean "peasantry"

had been in existence on the fringes of the plantations for centuries in a nascent state. This proto-peasantry consisted of the slaves who tilled their master's fields for six days a week; but, on their one free day, they would often spend the day industriously cultivating their own small garden plot. It is important to clarify here that this proto-peasantry varied greatly from peasantries in other parts of the world in that they, at least initially, "controlled neither the land nor their own time and labour" (Marshall 1985:2). They achieved true status as a peasantry when they became free of their plantation obligations. The maroons in the hills of Jamaica also became rural cultivators. Squatters in the hills of Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, and Cuba tilled any soil not claimed by the plantation owners or cattle ranchers.

A common argument is whether one should refer to these Caribbean agricultural producers as members of a true peasantry. Peasantries are not phenomena which manifest themselves in a uniform form anywhere in the world. They cannot be viewed as a consistently homogeneous unit. Peasantries in Africa can be, and are, quite distinct from each other as well as from those found in the highlands of Andean America or Europe. Agricultural producers in the Caribbean display a wide range of variation in their socio-economic structures. It is true that the origins of the Caribbean peasantries which emerged bear little historical semblance to those found elsewhere; however, they do share certain socio-economic commonalties with other peasantries found in the world.

What all peasant studies have in common is their definition of the peasant as primarily a rural cultivator, with relatively small land-holdings, and being part of an exploited social group within a larger societal structure called the nation-state (Foster 1967; Gudeman 1978; Kroeber 1948; Mintz 1973; Potter 1967; Redfield 1956; Shanin 1973; and Wolf 1957). When trying to describe a social group as "peasants," it is important to observe the types of interrelationships this group has with the dominant segment of society in terms of its social, economic, political, religious, and geographical matrices. Firth wrote that "the term peasant has primarily an economic referent" (1963:87). He

viewed the term as referring to a "socio-economic category," and thought that non-cultivators such as artisanal fishermen should be included in this category (Firth 1966:5). George Foster, also, considered the relations of production as important in defining what is a peasant. He wrote, "it is not what peasants produce that is significant; it is how and to whom they dispose of what they produce that counts" (Foster 1967:6).

There are certainly common threads which tie together peasant communities throughout the world. These include the following: (1) the household is the major unit of production and consumption; (2) the peasant is a small-scale producer; (3) the peasant employs simple technology and relies principally on household labor in production activities; (4) the main production activity is geared towards household maintenance and is not a business for profit in the purely capitalist sense; (5) the peasant controls, at least partially, his own means of production; (6) the largest institutions the peasant interacts with on a frequent basis are the local community and market; and finally, (7) in marketing the peasant rarely controls the price at which his commodities are sold and never the commodities which he must buy (Ennew *et al.* 1977; Firth 1963; Foster 1967; Roseberry 1976; Shanin 1973; and Wolf 1957).

The peasantry is an exploited class in the nation-state. Peasants produce for their own subsistence needs, but must also produce a surplus which is then extracted from them in the form of rent. The methods in which this rent is extracted vary. It can be taken in the form of taxes paid in cash, produce, or in labor. Most nation-states where a peasant class exists will employ a combination of these methods to extract surplus. The peasant pays rent, but is not usually accorded the privilege of political representation within society, and is traditionally powerless in the face of "multidirectional subjection to powerful outsiders" (Shanin 1973:64). The peasantry is in a subordinate relationship in every society where they are found. However, the level of integration of a peasantry with the larger society varies. Redfield observed:



there are two kinds of people, peasants and a more urban (or at least manorial) elite. The two kinds of people look at each other, at that joint or hinge in the total society, and have for each other attitudes that complement (but not always compliment) each other. (1956:60)

It is this "rent," through the rights and obligations it entails for repayment, that forces the peasantry to have some participation in the larger (nonpeasant) economic system and society (Roseberry 1976:46).

Eric Wolf, in his important work on peasant communities, developed a definition of peasant communities which included two basic types—the "closed corporate" and the "open" peasant community (c.f. 1957, 1966). He describes the most salient characteristics of a "closed corporate" peasant community as being the following: (1) it strictly limits its members participation in the greater society; (2) only "insiders" may be allowed full access to community lands and resources; and, (3) levelling devices prevent individuals from obtaining too much wealth at the expense of other community members. These levelling mechanisms are characterized by communities which place value on reciprocity and redistribution of material wealth, preventing large-scale socio-economic differentiation in favor of equitable distribution among villagers. So that, a "closed corporate" community can also be defined as having a "moral economy" which is at odds with the individualism prevalent in the larger capitalist oriented society (Scott 1976). On the other hand, the "open" peasant community is a village "where communal jurisdiction over land is absent, membership is unrestricted, and wealth is not redistributed" (Wolf 1957:235). Wolf, too, is clearly interested in defining the peasantry in terms of their relations of production with the national-level elite and how relations of power are expressed between the peasant community and the national economy.

The "closed corporate" community type of peasantry, as defined by Wolf, is not found in the Caribbean. In the Caribbean, among the rural populations, there is a high degree of individualization, particularly economic individualization, within the social structure (Mintz 1971:20). This being the case, it is hardly surprising that the "open"

peasant community is the prevalent type found throughout the Caribbean. It is true that some community types are more "open" than others. Church organized communities in post-emancipation Jamaica limited their membership to those individuals willing to adhere to church defined behavior patterns. In these communities, social ostracism and forfeiture of usufruct rights to community land was the penalty for severe transgressions contrary to community defined behavior ( Mintz 1974; M. G. Smith 1956). Conformity was mandatory in order to be a community member (Mintz 1974:175-176). However, M. G. Smith argues that over time community control by the founding church denominations has been eroded for the most part in the rural areas, and, today, is only important in areas where the community is considerably isolated (1956:298).

Richard Frucht claims that such terms as "peasant" and "proletarian" cannot be applied in a strict categorical sense in the Caribbean. Frucht argues that the Caribbean small-scale producers "exhibit a peasant-like means of production along with proletarian-like relations of production" (1967:295). Small-scale production in the Caribbean has its "peasant-like" components which include the cultivation of small plots using household labor and traditional manual technology, but the relations of production based on the "sale of labour for wages in cash or in kind, and the latter through systems of sharecropping, farming-out, and under conditions of male labour emigration" are proletarian (Frucht 1967:296). The existence together of such usually distinct "means" and "relations" of production are viewed by Frucht as a necessary adaptation to the fluctuations of life in a marginal economy (Frucht 1967:296).

Mintz identifies four types of Caribbean peasantry with distinct origins: (1) the squatter; (2) the early yeoman; (3) the proto-peasantry; and, (4) the runaway peasantry (1974:147-154). The runaway peasantry, or maroon societies, have already been discussed, as have the early yeoman of the British islands, such as the Barbados "redlegs," whose descendants are impoverished rural farmers still living in Barbados in very small numbers. The majority of these yeoman, however, were quickly pushed

aside by the land hungry plantation-owners in their quest for fresh lands and by the end of the seventeenth century ceased to exist. Members of the early squatter and proto-peasantry types formed the nucleus of today's Caribbean rural population.

For the sake of brevity, I will leave the discussion of the squatter type peasantry for the next section of this chapter. The origins of a peasant class in the Dominican Republic is representative of squatter peasantries. The other hispanophone islands of Puerto Rico and Cuba also had a large squatter element in the formation of their peasantries. The origins of all four of these types of Caribbean peasantry could be found only on the margins of the plantation system. Frequently, these peasant groups were viewed as obstacles towards the economic development of the islands by the members of the elite. They were, as Mintz refers to them, "interstitial groupings" existing on the fringes of plantation system when the plantocracy allowed its vigilance to relax for a time (1974:146).

### The Growth of a Dominican Peasantry

Slaves made the transition from proto-peasantry to a "free" Caribbean peasantry either through emancipation (as is the case of the British, French, Dutch colonies, Puerto Rico, and Cuba), through revolution (as is the case for Haiti), or a combination of both (this being the case in Santo Domingo). The latter point is in need of further clarification. Unlike Saint-Domingue, after the sixteenth century when sugar-cane cultivation no longer was the major industry in the colony, Santo Domingo had a much smaller percentage of slaves in relation to total number of persons living in the colony. Slaves never comprised more than a minority of the population. In the eighteenth century, out of an approximate population of 100,000 persons of European, African, and mixed heritage, conservative figures believe that not more than between ten or twelve thousand were slaves (Bosch 1983:126).

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the colony of Santo Domingo did not rely heavily on slave production since plantation production for export had been reduced to a minor industry. However, trade between the cattle ranchers of Santo Domingo and the plantations of Saint-Domingue in livestock, meat, and leather, constituted a major part of the Spanish colony's economic livelihood at this time. When the slave revolution broke out next door in Saint-Domingue at the end of the eighteenth century, it had serious, and immediate, economic repercussions in the colony of Santo Domingo.

Soon all of Hispaniola became a battleground between French forces trying to thwart the slave revolt, the Haitians ex-slaves trying to protect their newly achieved independence, and British forces fighting both groups at different times. When Toussaint L'Ouverture, the leader of the Haitian army, invaded Santo Domingo in 1801, many slaves were emancipated by their masters to help combat the Haitian threat. Many of these ex-slaves actively participated in the Dominican resistance. Other Dominican slaves, not being emancipated by their owners, fled at the first opportunity to join the army of Toussaint L'Ouverture, obtaining their freedom in this manner.

There were still others who took advantage of the fighting between the various forces and escaped into the rugged interior of Santo Domingo, hiding in the cordilleras and becoming squatters. Between 1796 and 1809, Santo Domingo was devastated by succeeding waves of French, British, and Haitian armies invading the colony. During this period many plantation owners fled with their slaves or suffered the wrath of the Haitian soldiers and were killed. The total population in the colony of Santo Domingo was greatly reduced. Statistics compiled by Moya Pons show that there were approximately 119,600 people living in Santo Domingo in 1783 (Moya Pons 1986:46). The next census figures available in 1819 show 71,223 people inhabiting the colony (1986:46). This represents a population reduction of approximately 40 percent. Warfare, uncertainty, disease, poor government, and starvation had all taken their toll on the Dominican population during these years.



Late in 1801, Santo Domingo was invaded by the French under General Leclerc and slavery was formally re-imposed. In actuality, there were few slaves to be found. Most had either escaped to the mountains, or had joined forces with the Haitian leaders Dessalines and Christophe, and were members of the army waiting to fight the French. By 1809, the colony formally reverted once more to the Spanish Crown. In the following twelve years of Spanish control of the colony, often referred to as *la España Boba* ("silly Spain"), slavery was still legal in the colony but was of little economic importance.

Slavery as a system was formally abolished forever in Santo Domingo when Haitian forces under President Boyer took over the colony in 1822. Former slaves, whether they achieved their freedom through emancipation, insurrection, or running away, were to form the nucleus of the Caribbean peasantry on most islands. However, in two Caribbean societies this was not completely true. In the Dominican Republic and on the island of Puerto Rico the majority of the peasantry were composed of freeman of mixed racial heritage. In Puerto Rico slavery remained a legal institution until 1873 (Knight 1978:124); however, poor freemen of all races who were landless were coerced onto the plantations through the use of labor laws forbidding vagrancy (Steward *et al.* 1956:57). Throughout Caribbean history the labor needs of the plantation-owner made him basically color-blind in times of need.

In the Dominican Republic the ranks of the peasantry were largely composed of squatters of mixed European-African or African descent. The *hateros* on their large ranches and the plantation owners in the south of the country were largely from European descent. In Dominican society upward mobility was generally limited to those who "were too noticeably Negroid" (Hoetink 1982:21). During the nineteenth century, population scarcity made it relatively easy for individuals to practice slash-and-burn agricultural techniques, since land was readily available. However, the best lands in the Cibao and on the southern coastal plain were controlled by the elite families of the

Dominican Republic whose cattle ranches and plantations occupied huge tracts of land. Typically, they chose the most fertile and well-watered areas of the country to locate these enterprises. Due to the chaos which arose from conflicting systems of land registration under the Spanish, French, and Haitian systems, claims to land were particularly difficult to validate and a source of constant legal contention between large landowners (Clausner 1973:130). Collusion between government officials and rich landowners made it easy for the wealthy to obtain the best lands for themselves.

Many of the Dominican peasant farmers in the early nineteenth century were so isolated that they were, by necessity, subsistence-oriented. They produced only enough to meet their family's needs. Those peasants who lived closer to Santo Domingo, Santiago, and Puerto Plata, were much more likely to also produce a cash crop. In the Cibao, and near Puerto Plata, this cash crop was usually tobacco, but sometimes cotton was grown. In both the northern and the southern areas of the country, some Dominican peasants would also spend part of the year harvesting wood for export to supplement their incomes. Gathering honey, collecting coconuts, or cutting sugar-cane in the southern coastal areas, also provided a source of income for the Dominican peasantry. Tobacco and lumber were the main Dominican exports during the early nineteenth century, but other exports reflect the variety of goods produced by the Dominican peasantry:

Había otros productos que significaban otras tantas actividades económicas y, claro está, otras tantas actividades empresariales. Además del tabaco y la caoba y el guayacán y el campeche, los dominicanos también producían y exportaban cigarros, resina de guayacán, cueros de res y chivo, miel de abejas y cera, almidón, cocos, conchas de Carey, azúcar y víveres, aunque el valor de todos estos productos juntos fuera siempre inferior al de la caoba o el tabaco por separado. (Moya Pons 1986:151)

The second half of the nineteenth century was the age of tobacco, the *hateros* and their *hatos*, *terrenos comuneros*, and the family-controlled sugar plantation. Roberto Cassá claims that the Dominican elite still had control of the export sector at the end of the

nineteenth century (1980:18). This is refuted by Hoetink who argues that, while tobacco was still largely controlled by the national elite at this time, "sugar required such sums for its processing that only a foreign market could provide the necessary credit" (1982: 69). The Dominican peasant in the nineteenth century, while certainly living with few luxuries, had access to lands in unoccupied regions of the country; that is, as long as no member of the elite wanted this land. This was to end in the beginning of the twentieth century with the occupation of the Dominican Republic by the United States.

During the twentieth century, a rapidly growing rural population decreased the availability of uncultivated lands. Furthermore, the land registration act of 1920, sponsored by U.S. interests in a then occupied Dominican Republic, allowed foreign nationals and rich Dominicans to seize vast holdings of communal lands, the *terrenos comuneros*, and any other lands which peasants had no clear titles to, worsening the plight of the Dominican peasantry (Black 1986a:23). In 1912, and again in 1920, land registration laws began to be enforced in the country in an attempt to correct the confusion of existing land titles. The Dominican peasants often did not comply with the governmental decrees to register their lands and as a result lost the chance to prove clear title to their holdings. This was the result of a deep rooted suspicion of the government's intentions:

Even in normal, or more accurately, less chaotic times, the campesino was likely to ignore the formalities required by law. Reflecting long bitter experience, his reaction to a legal requirement to present his documents of ownership at any given public office was the conviction that someone planned to take his land. (Clausner 1973:129)

The Dominican *latifundia* grew enormously during this time, and this growth was often at the expense of the poor. Many rural Dominicans lost the right to their lands and were forced to become members of a rural proletariat class. This disenfranchised class furnished the labor for sugar plantations controlled by foreigners and the national elite.

Those peasants who were able to retain their landholdings had them fragmented by adhering to the legal tradition of bilateral inheritance. Legally, all recognized offspring

had equal inheritance rights to their parents property, but in reality the sons usually divided the land among themselves, while the daughters would retain the house and household possessions. Landholdings became increasingly fragmented as farmers passed on land to their sons. Ultimately, many plots became so small that they were not capable of supporting a family. This also succeeded in forcing members of the rural population to seek wage work, or become sharecroppers. Large ranches and farms called *latifundia*, which are controlled by a few rich individuals, and many small holdings consisting of less than one hectare, often referred to as *minifundia*, for the majority of rural cultivators, is the typical structure of land tenure in the Dominican Republic today.

The plight of the Dominican peasantry in the late twentieth century is dismal. The best lands are concentrated in the hands of a few. Rural life is marked by high unemployment (as high as 50 percent), high rates of illiteracy (approximately 80 percent), and a life expectancy as low as 52 years (Black 1986a:59). It is no wonder that Wiarda wrote that "the campesino (peasant) has historically been the forgotten man in Dominican life" (1969: 91). The economy of the Dominican Republic today differs little from that of its colonial past and continues its reliance on the export of primary sector commodities such as sugar, gold, and beef (Rodríguez Núñez 1984:19). Historically, the poorer rural population has benefited little from this export trade. However, a new industry has arisen in the Dominican Republic which, since 1982, has overtaken agriculture and mineral extraction to become the number one foreign income generator in the Dominican economy - tourism.

### Enclave Tourism and the Dominican Republic

It is no surprise that today's world tourist industry centers and largest markets are found in Europe and North America. First world tourist agencies, controlling the flow of tourists to various Caribbean vacation spots, naturally look for locations where the



national government and private industry are likely to grant special privileges to these foreign-based multinational tourism corporations. Tourism has become the largest growth industry in the region, expanding rapidly in the British Caribbean during the 1950s and 1960s, and growing in economic importance steadily throughout the insular Caribbean since the 1970s (Mandle 1989: 247).

Since most of the Caribbean nations and territories provide the basic prerequisites desired by the tourists going on a tropical holiday (i.e., sun, sea, sand, and relative proximity to the tourist sending nations), these multinational tourist corporations find it is easy to bargain with regional governments from a position of power. They have the ability to direct, or divert, the flow of tourists to any particular tourist destination in the Caribbean. An attempt to understand the impact of the introduction of tourism in the Caribbean must take into consideration the existing political economy and its historical/structural development. Keeping this in mind, with few exceptions, Caribbean tourism mimics the political and economic patterns already evident in the production and export of traditional agricultural and mineral commodities of the region: (1) the global market is controlled by companies located in the first world; (2) Caribbean tourist locations must compete with other LDC locations throughout the world for a limited market share; and, (3) the growth of the tourist industry in the Caribbean (and in most LDC tourist destinations) is highly susceptible to changes in the economic and political climate of the first world sender nations.

Tourism has been promoted with a fervor by many of the national governments in the Caribbean region. This region's many insular nations, with few natural resources, high population densities, and an historical reliance on a few agricultural cash crops (principally sugar, coffee, and tobacco), consider tourism an attractive strategy to enhance their countries' economic vitality. However, the Caribbean tourism industry is rarely controlled by individuals within the host nation.

The Dominican Republic initiated the development of a tourism industry relatively late in comparison to other Caribbean nations such as Barbados, Puerto Rico, or Jamaica. In 1966, a visitor to Santo Domingo would have found only three international-class hotels in the capital, all of them badly in need of renovation. Prior to 1967, tourism in the Dominican Republic had been a negative factor (Bell 1981:341). More Dominicans traveled abroad to other countries than foreigners came to visit the Dominican Republic. This has changed rapidly in the last twenty years. The Dominican government took the first steps towards promoting tourism in 1967, creating a special Ministry of Tourism to handle the industry's development, and by appointing Angel Miolán as director-general of this organization.

During the 1970s, President Balaguer and his ministers strongly supported government and private investment in the national tourist industry. In 1971, a "tourist incentive law" (Law 153), was introduced which provided tax breaks and fee exemptions for private individuals investing in tourist businesses of scale. The implied goal of the industry was to provide a framework for raising the standard of living of the local population and increase the nation's revenue. The profits from tourism would, in theory, later be redirected towards further diversification of the economy (Wiarda and Kryzanek 1982:84-85). Through the services of the government and the *Banco Central de la República Dominicana*, an organization called *El Desarrollo de la Infraestructura Turística*, or INFRATUR, was created to finance and direct the development of tourism zones (ALIFD 1977:39). The development of tourism in the Dominican Republic, unlike the agri-business, mining, and manufacturing industries, has been pre-dominantly financed by domestic investors (EIU 1990:28). Since 1982, tourism had become the largest foreign exchange earner in the Dominican Republic (EIU 1990:22). Early growth figures for the industry have been highly satisfactory, but has tourism promoted growth in other sectors as a result of a multiplier effect?

One of the earliest studies of regional tourism in the Dominican Republic concluded that its role as a catalyst for development of other industries had "not been very encouraging" (Yunén 1977:70). In the Dominican Republic it is estimated, according to conservative figures, that the national economy is losing 48 to 53 percent of every dollar of hard currency earned from tourist expenditures through leakages to metropolitan countries (EUI 1990:22). This currency is lost principally in paying for the cost of industry related imported goods. If tourism projects are designed to provide more direct linkages at the community level, the natural multiplier effect of this industry will provide locally more secondary employment related to tourism, and reduce the nation's external leakages. Tourism must be integrated into the economy and successfully serve to promote other local activities in order to meet development goals (Matthews 1978:48).

The principal development model used by tourism planners in the Dominican Republic is the enclave resort. Studies of the enclave resort conducted in the insular Pacific area concluded that these resorts do little to promote either economic or cultural linkages at the local and regional level (S. Britton 1982; Rodenburg 1980). One of the main characteristics of an enclave resort is its inclusiveness. The management of an enclave resort create and control a cultural, as well as physical, environment catering to the needs and desires of the tourist clientele. These resorts, and the tourists, often come to "symbolize foreign wealth and privilege in the midst of native poverty" (Manning 1982:13). Cohen points out that:

Tourism has the most serious dislocating effects and yields the smallest relative benefits for locals when large-scale, high-standard facilities are rapidly introduced by outside developers into an otherwise poorly developed area; dependency, rather than development, then results. (1984:384)

However, despite the evidence indicating the limitations this type of resort offers for regional growth, the enclave resort is the model most frequently chosen for development of a region in the Dominican Republic.

The private investor and local government planners favor the enclave model because centralized development projects maximize the benefits from limited finances. In LDCs, such as the Dominican Republic, where initial "infrastructural deficiencies may be severe," the costs for tourism development must be borne, at least initially, by the host government (Pearce 1989:95). In the Dominican Republic the government invested millions of dollars, the majority of it borrowed from international credit agencies, in its tourism zones. The majority of this borrowed money was invested in the Puerto Plata tourist zone between 1974–1982 in order to establish the facilities necessary to attract private investors (Wiarda and Kryzanek 1982:85). An international airport, a government owned hotel with training facilities for hotel management and restaurant staff, sewage treatment facilities, and improved roads were just a few of the projects financed with this money. For the host government, improving the necessary services to the standards demanded by metropolitan tourists in a few centralized tourist zones is economically more feasible than in many dispersed locations. Nevertheless, the Dominican Republic made a serious economic choice in promoting tourism because its development cost determines that other sectors of the economy will, by necessity, be neglected (Rodenburg 1980:189).

Tourism, as a labor intensive industry, does provide employment for many members of the host society. The majority of these created positions, however, do not demand a high degree of formal training, and tourism "requires a less skilled labor force than does agriculture" (Gunn 1979:15). In the Dominican Republic, with its high rate of unemployment, some individuals believe that any job created in the region is important, even if it is not high paying and subject to seasonal lay-offs, because any job is "certainly better than no jobs at all" (Wiarda and Kryzanek 1982:84).

The enclave resort model promoted by the Dominican government could be viewed as producing an economic situation whereby the lower-classes are exploited as a source of cheap labor and the local elites and foreign companies reap the economic benefits. If this



criticism is true, the poorer segments of society may have a few more employment opportunities, but these are counter-balanced by negative factors such as rising land prices associated with speculation and higher crime rates. Valene L. Smith argues, with data gathered from outside the Caribbean, that tourism is a minor agent of culture change (1989). She quotes one of her informants as saying, "tourism is not important in our lives—we see the world on television every night" (Valene L. Smith 1989:9).

Furthermore, she reasons that many local employees have obtained positions of responsibility in resort facilities and view tourism as "an avenue for upward mobility" (Valene L. Smith 1989:7).

Perhaps, the longer a community associates itself with tourism, some local individuals learn how to control the operational sphere of the local industry and maximize the benefits that can be received from tourism. But are these benefits likely to be distributed throughout the community? Or, are they concentrated only among a few individuals who, because of educational background, previously acquired wealth, or both, are better able to manipulate their interactions with the industry to their own benefit?

In terms of the number of visitors coming to the country, and foreign revenue generated, tourism development has been a success for the Dominican Republic. Tourism surpassed agriculture in 1982 as the number one foreign exchange earner in the economy (EIU 1990:22). It is the third largest source of employment in the country as well (EIU 1990:22). Sponsored by the slogan, "Come to the land that Columbus loved," the importance of tourism in the Dominican economy was indicated when the head of the tourist ministry, INFRATUR, was elevated to a cabinet post during the presidency of Guzmán (Wiarda and Kryzanek 1982: 85). The question remains, however, which Dominicans are really benefiting from the growth of this industry?

### CHAPTER THREE A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF LUPERÓN'S HISTORY

#### Introduction

The presence of large-scale tourism and hotel resorts is a new phenomenon in the *municipio* of Luperón. The invasion of the "Golden Horde" that began in 1987 was not, however, the first time foreigners have found hospitality on the shores of the *municipio*. It was in Luperón that Columbus landed in A.D. 1493, accompanied by twelve hundred colonists from Spain, to build the first "permanent" European settlement in the Caribbean. Columbus named the site La Isabela in honor of Queen Isabella I. Here, at this site, the acculturation process frequently referred to as the Columbian Exchange began in all its myriad of facets. Five hundred years later, this brief moment in the colonial history of the Caribbean, the discovery and settlement of La Isabela, is still a source of regional change. The fact that the site of La Isabela is located in Luperón is a source of pride for many inhabitants. However, there is a price to pay in having this historical monument located in the *municipio* that many of the inhabitants cannot, or are not willing, to pay.

It is not by chance that the western borders of the Puerto Plata tourist zone are located in the *municipio* of Luperón. Granted, it has beautiful vistas, pleasant beaches, and friendly inhabitants, but so do other locations much closer to the city of Puerto Plata. In fact, to people living in Santo Domingo and Santiago, Luperón is considered

nothing more than a rural backwater. Several individuals in these communities said, upon learning where I was conducting my research, "Oh, you are living in the frontier."

The tourist resort in Luperón is presently isolated from other tourist ventures. The closest neighboring resort is located more than 30 kilometers by road from the Luperón Beach Resort. What attracted developers and land speculators to this area, and is beginning to attract more and more day tourists as well, are the archaeological ruins of Columbus's La Isabela. This historical site has enormous potential for drawing large numbers of tourists in the near future, particularly with all the promotion that the quincentennial anniversary of the "discovery" is receiving in the world press.

Every tourist brochure I saw detailing the wonders of the Puerto Plata tourist zone promoted the site of La Isabela as an important national treasure. Local tour guides never fail to mention that the Dominican Republic was the "land that Columbus loved" (the fact that Haiti is also part of Hispaniola, and that it was in Haiti in A.D. 1492 that the Spanish first landed and built a temporary settlement, is typically ignored), and that the first Spanish colony in the New World is located in the province of Puerto Plata. Local preparations for the quincentennial anniversary celebration, to be held in 1992 (actually one year early in the case of La Isabela), were well underway in 1989. By the end of 1991, a new church was being finished at the site of La Isabela for the commemorative Mass the Pope planned to celebrate during his expected visit in October 1992. Furthermore, plans to repair, pave, and widen the main roads to the archaeological site were being finalized in the beginning of 1992, so that visiting dignitaries could easily come to the planned festivities. Unfortunately, after all the plans and preparations had been made the Pope never went to La Isabela, choosing to attend celebrations held in other regions of the country. Nevertheless, it is amazing that a poorly situated settlement, lasting only four years A.D. 1493–1497, is the main focus of the area's tourist promotions. The other 496 years are completely ignored. This is unfortunate. The region has played a significant role in both national and international

history that goes far beyond the importance of the first four years so touted by Dominican tourist brochures.

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly recount the history of five hundred years of Luperón's history. This is assuredly an exercise in brevity and historical spotlighting.<sup>1</sup> The *municipio* has a long and significant history apart from the brief period when La Isabela was the center of Spanish colonial hopes on the island. Even though most locals are fully cognizant of the important role the region has played in the historical development of the Dominican Republic, few of these historical facts, other than the establishment of La Isabela, are mentioned to tourists. The typical feeling of the *luperonenses* is that foreigners (*americanos*) would not be interested.

Not all tourists are interested in learning about local history. However, during the course of my fieldwork, and stints as an unofficial tour guide, I found that a significant number of tourists did express interest in learning about the region's historical development. Many tourists were fascinated to learn about Luperón's significant contributions to the national historical mosaic. More than once I was asked why local *hoteliers* do not have more historical information about the region available. The answer to this question might lie in the type of tourism the local resort was trying to attract, package tour "mass" tourism. The belief of resort management was that the typical "mass" tourist came for the sea, sand, sun, and fun. The belief that the "typical" tourist did not come to learn about Dominican culture would preclude the necessity of providing this type of information.

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<sup>1</sup> This is an abridged history focusing only on the development of the *municipio* and town of Luperón. It is part of a much more comprehensive examination of 500 years of colonial and Dominican national history and the role Luperón has played in this drama. For those readers interested in learning more about the role Luperón has played in course of Dominican development and a broader historical analysis of Dominican colonialism I suggest they read the historical sketch provided in Appendix B in lieu of this chapter.



Knowledge of local history gives clues to the present cultural ecology of the region, sociocultural beliefs, political structures, and an understanding of how they developed in response to both local, regional, and international forces. I choose to begin this chapter with a quick historical review of what I call the "exploited history of Luperón." This refers to the period when Columbus arrived and when the settlement of La Isabela was occupied. The rest of the chapter will be devoted to an overview of municipal history during the succeeding five centuries. I choose to refer to this period as the "unexploited history of Luperón." At times, the historical accounts will lead the reader away from the borders of the region for brief periods as local history becomes intertwined with regional, national, and global movements, but the tale will always wind its way back to the *municipio*.

The *municipio* of Luperón has been directly involved in several important historical movements during Dominican history aside from its initial colonization by Columbus and his conquistadors. These warrant special attention in this chapter. These include the role the *municipio* played in supplying the pro-independence troops against the Spanish in the early 1860s during the war of restoration (*La guerra de la Restauración*, 1861-1864). A century later the region again became a battleground. The failed invasions by the pro-democracy forces seeking to overthrow the dictator Trujillo chose to land on the shores of Luperón in 1949, and again in 1959, with horrendous consequences for the individuals involved.

### The *Municipio* in the Early Years

The *municipio* of Luperón will always have a special place in history. It is the location of the first "permanent" Spanish colony in the western hemisphere and it was at La Isabela that the acculturation process began between the Old World and New World populations began in earnest. Christopher Columbus, returning on his second voyage

to the Caribbean in late 1493, found the sailors from the first voyage who had remained at La Navidad after his ship the Santa Maria had foundered on a reef off the northern coast of Haiti dead and the small fort he had constructed at the site burnt and completely destroyed.

Columbus's first voyage had been one of exploration, his second was one of colonization. After leaving the ruins of La Navidad with his seventeen ships, he sailed east seeking a suitable location for his first permanent settlement. After sending out several caravels to search the north coast of Hispaniola for suitable locations, Columbus selected the mouth of the Bajabonico river as home for the colonists who accompanied him.<sup>2</sup> One reason that this location might have been given preference over others as the site of the first European town on the island of Española was because fate had provided the fleet with unfavorable winds. The historian Americo Lugo noted that Columbus *"volvió allí el 7 de Diciembre siguiente buscando asiento para poblar; pero fuéronle contrarios los vientos, 'i no pudo pasar al Puerto de Gracias [Luperón's harbor], que está a 5 o 6 Leguas de el de Puerto Plata; i hubo de volver atrás tres Leguas, adonde sale a la Mar un Río Grande i hai vn buen puerto"* (Lugo 1938:263-264). Arriving at the bay, located 160 kilometers to the east of La Navidad with his fleet, he began erecting the port town of La Isabela.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Actually, according to Bartolomé de las Casas one of the central reasons for selecting La Isabela as the location for the first settlement was its proximity to the gold fields of the Cibao. A short voyage through the pass in the mountains of the Cordillera Septentrional, near present day town of Los Hidalgos, and the river Yaque del Norte was accessible. Just beyond the river, the gold fields of Santo Tomás were located in the foothills of the Cordillera Central (1909:154-155).

<sup>3</sup> The site of La Isabela may have been first "discovered" by the captain of the Pinta, Martín Alonzo Pinzón, on the first voyage during his famous solo expedition when he deserted Columbus. Las Casas mentioned that Pinzón had spent sixteen days trading with the Amerindians for gold at a place he called the Río de Gracias and that this location was only a short distance to the sources of gold on the island. Columbus later anchored at this site on his return part of his first voyage. He noted its good anchorage by the mouth of a river. He mentioned that this site was three leagues to the southeast of Punta Roja (Punta Rucia?). The only possible locations could be the mouth of the Río Bajabonico or the Río Jaiba which is much smaller and provides poor anchorage.

Little is known about the Amerindians who lived in the area at the time of contact. Americo Lugo claims that the town of La Isabela was built close to a Taino village (1938:264). To which of the six major *caciques* on the island the local Amerindians claimed principal allegiance to is unclear. Most likely it was to Guarionex, or his close ally Mayobanex, both of whom controlled vast territories nearby. The historian Ursula Lamb supports this position and wrote that the territory where La Isabela was founded was under the control of the *cacique* Guarionex (1956:91).

It is almost certain the Amerindian people living near the coast at the time of contact relied heavily on harvesting resources from the sea to help feed their communities. Maritime adaptations have figured predominantly in many prehistoric Caribbean sites. Little is known about the earliest inhabitants of the Caribbean. There is evidence to suggest that humans have been living on the Caribbean islands and relying on marine resources since at least 4000 B.P. (Rouse 1960:10). There is still some speculation as to where they came from, and how they arrived on the islands, but most scholars now agree that a South American origin is the most plausible theory. Little is known about these earliest fisher folk and hunter-gatherers except that they were broad-spectrum foragers, classified as Meso-Indians, and left an account of their activities in the form of large shell middens (Rouse 1960:8). What little archaeological evidence that has been studied from these earliest inhabitants of Hispaniola suggests that marine and littoral resources played a major part in their diet.

When the first European explorers entered the Caribbean and observed the indigenous population they commented favorably about the richness of the marine resources harvested. Both the Taino and Carib peoples relied on a combination of agricultural products and marine proteins to provide a balanced diet (Price 1966). Fish,

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The diary also comments that this location had a lot of shipworm. Could this be the first visit of Columbus to the *municipio* of Luperón? I find that the geographical descriptions Columbus gives in his diary make it almost certain it was. (Las Casas 1989:322-323)

molluscs, turtles, marine mammals, and sea birds were all incorporated into the local diet (Sauer 1966). The sea was the main source of animal proteins for the Amerindians:

Plants provided the starch and sugar of the native diet; animals supplied the protein and fat in admirable balance. It was an economy of growing roots for carbohydrate food and of getting most of the rest of the diet from water, both salt and fresh. (Sauer 1966:58)

The combination of carbohydrates from the land and protein from the water allowed the Taino to produce a surplus.

The accumulation and redistribution of this bounty from land and sea was controlled by the upper echelons of Taino society. At the time of contact, Hispaniola was at a chiefdom level of social organization (Knight 1978:14). Roberto Cassá typologically places the Taino people as belonging in the advanced Neolithic age or, using the Mesoamerican classification of cultures, as belonging in the late archaic period of development (1974:21). The *caciques*, or chiefs, were powerful leaders who, with the help of their advisors the *nitaino*, were responsible for organizing the "commoners" when communal labor was necessary (Wilson 1990:32).<sup>4</sup>

The Taino of the Greater Antilles and the Caribs in the Lesser Antilles were accomplished fisher folk. They employed highly sophisticated methods to harvest the resources of the sea, many of which are still being utilized by the artisanal fishermen of Hispaniola today. It is known that the Taino used hand-nets, shell and bone fish-hooks on hand-lines, fishing spears, and harpoons, for capturing fish, turtles, and sea mammals (Sauer 1966:58). Sauer believes that the Amerindian diet was a well-balanced one and that "in productivity the West Indian native economy cannot be rated as inferior" (1966:59).

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<sup>4</sup> Wilson has carefully identified that there were four social classes found on Hispaniola among the Taino at the time of contact. He is careful to point out that traditional definitions of the different tiers in Taino society are rather obvious reflections of Spanish social status prevalent at the time of contact and an exact understanding of Taino social organization and kinship system may never be brought to light (Wilson 1990:33).



Soon after the arrival of the European colonists, the populations of turtles and sea mammals began to decline rapidly. Christopher Columbus first mistook manatees to be "uglier than described in the legends" mermaids (Las Casas 1989:321). Soon the Spaniards learned that these slow moving animals provided a delicious source of meat. Since then, they have been hunted to the point of extinction on the island of Hispaniola. None are found near the shores of Luperón. Sea fowl and turtles were also heavily exploited for food and over the centuries their numbers have declined significantly.

The Amerindian fishing techniques were rapidly assimilated by the Spanish colonists. The newcomers readily adopted, with occasional modifications, the indigenous fishing techniques. Only one major technological device, the seine net, was introduced by Europeans that had not previously been employed by the Amerindians (Price 1966:1374). Seine nets come in two basic varieties; the beach seine, and the boat seine. The following is a basic description of this type of net:

Seine nets are typical gear for bulk fishery, especially in lakes and along the beaches of the seas where the water is not so deep. They have a typical form with a strong centre for holding the fish, long wings on both sides, and mostly very long hauling lines attached on the wings. For collecting the caught fish in the centre of the seine net it is sufficient that the net be hung loosely and bolted. But it is more convenient when a net bag is attached between the wings—it may be also with a retarding device to prevent the escaping of the fish. These constitute the two basic types of seines: the seines without bags and the seines with bags. (von Brandt 1972:158)

Seine nets were introduced into the Caribbean area, but the small woven nets called *kalis* by the Island Caribs, which were woven from plant fibers, had previously been used (Price 1966:1366). The *kalis* were probably similar to the hand-held throw nets called *atarrayas* used by the Taino which are still being employed by the fishermen of the Dominican Republic today (Vega 1981:30). Other techniques used by the Taino which are still being employed by the fishermen of the Dominican Republic include fish pots, hand-lines, trolling, and "jacking" (this is a method of night fishing where the

fisherman uses an electric lantern or torch to attract fish to the boat and then catches them with a net or by hook and line).

It was Amerindians practicing these types of maritime adaptations that Columbus met at La Isabela and contemporary accounts mention that the indigenous inhabitants made the Spaniards welcome. Chanca, a doctor who accompanied Columbus on his second voyage and who was responsible for the colonists' health at La Isabela, mentioned that many natives came to visit, both males and females, bringing food and information to the Spaniards (Chanca 1932:61). Archaeologist Kathleen Deagan believes that the region was densely populated by the Taino at the time of contact (1988:207). The fact that both Taino and Spanish remains have been found buried in the Spanish cemetery at La Isabela suggests that, at least initially, relations between the two groups was cordial and that they intermingled freely.

There is other evidence in the *municipio* of Luperón of a large Taino population living in the region at the time of contact. Remains of Taino pottery and ceramics abound in the region. Local farmers working in their fields frequently recover small shards. Many of the larger pieces adorned with faces or intricate patterns are sold by inhabitants to local shops where tourists purchase these antiquities. Initially, I believed that many of these ceramic pieces were fakes because of the multitude available in the shops. However, when discussing the authenticity of these artifacts with Kathleen Deagan, she informed me that the majority of Taino artifacts found in local shops are genuine (1989: personal communication). Traditionally, these artifacts were difficult to purchase in rural areas of the country. Many rural Dominicans believed these Taino ceramic pieces had magical powers to protect one from pains of evil origin and had the power to keep urns of drawn water fresh (Vega 1981:50). Today, ample supplies are available for purchase by tourists. I did notice several households in Luperón which had Taino artifacts prominently displayed. However, whether they were kept for decoration, or for their magical properties, was never clearly determined.

The exact number of Amerindian inhabitants living on Hispaniola at the time of contact is open to speculation. Population estimates range from the high figure of 3,000,000, cited by Las Casas (1951), to the rather conservative figure of 100,000 (Rosenblatt 1954). Kathleen Deagan, co-director of the archaeological reconstruction of La Isabela, believes the Taino population of Hispaniola to have been in the range of "several million" at the time of contact in A.D. 1492. This figure is based on the computation of archaeological site densities encountered in the few areas that have been thoroughly surveyed on Hispaniola (1988:197-198). Dominican historian Frank Moya Pons arrives at a much lower figure of around 600,000 Taino inhabitants (1977:62). Whether one accepts the higher or lower estimates is of little importance here, the fact remains that Taino population numbers plummeted catastrophically in the years immediately following contact and their eradication in the course of a few decades amounts to one of the worst cases of genocide in the historical record.

By 1515, the indigenous population on the island had been reduced to fewer than 25,000 inhabitants (Sauer 1966:200-201). The original Taino population was augmented by the importation of many Amerindians who had been enslaved on other islands. They were brought to Hispaniola to work in the gold mines. According to Moya Pons, more than 40,000 Amerindian laborers were transported from such places as the Bahamas, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico between 1508-1513 to work for the Spanish (1977:62). It made little difference. The original inhabitants of Hispaniola, and those Amerindians imported from other Caribbean islands, died equally rapidly. In 1518, a smallpox epidemic further reduced a small and weakened population of Amerindians on the island to around 3,000 individuals (Moya Pons 1977:68). In less than thirty years, one of the "most densely settled prestate, sedentary societies in the New World" had been completely eradicated from the face of the earth (Deagan 1988:196).

The first colonists at La Isabela fared only a little better than the Amerindians. The first months at La Isabela were exceedingly trying for the Spaniards. February, 1494,



saw over half the colonists sick and the supplies of food brought from Europe were running low (Wilson 1990:78). Columbus sent twelve of his seventeen ships back to Spain loaded with gold, parrots, and enslaved Amerindians. Along with these goods he sent a plea for more supplies (Wilson 1990:78). According to various letters written by Columbus, local Amerindians supplied the colonists with ample stores of *ages* (yams or sweet manioc) and cassava bread, but still the Spaniards became ill and suffered from hunger (Columbus 1961:61-65).

During the same period, Spanish expeditions seeking gold had been sent inland to find the gold mines rumored to abound in the interior. They found gold in the Cibao region and favorable reports of rich gold regions fueled the colonists' greed. Columbus, himself, led a large army of soldiers and accompanying Amerindians into the Cibao region in search of gold in March, 1494 (Wilson 1990:78-80). Those Spanish too weak to march remained at La Isabela, where they continued to suffer acutely from disease and hunger, and a number died during this period (Moya Pons 1977:56).

Columbus founded the *fortaleza* Santo Tomás near the site of promising gold fields during his exploration of the Cibao region in 1494. Upon returning to La Isabela from his first expedition inland, Columbus found the settlement at La Isabela seething with discontent. Illness had taken its toll, killing many Spaniards, and most colonists remaining at La Isabela were suffering from a combination of maladies. Dissension against Columbus's leadership was growing among the *hidalgos*. They blamed the diseases which had affected most of the colonists on overwork. Columbus demanded that every man, regardless of whether they were nobility or commoner, help in the construction of the town. Most colonists at La Isabela were interested in finding gold and becoming rich and not in building a permanent settlement. Parry and Sherlock maintain that even an excellent administrator would have found it difficult to control these early conquistadors:



It would have taken a leader of commanding genius to maintain discipline among those early Spanish settlers—touchy, adventurous and greedy as they were—to compel them to clear the forest, build houses, and plant crops instead of roaming about the island in search of gold or of slaves. Great explorer and sea commander, brilliant navigator though he was, Columbus had neither the experience nor the temperament of a successful colonial governor. (1971:7-8)

Columbus treated his rebellious colonists with ruthless efficiency. Less than one month after founding La Isabela the first revolt, led by the company's chief accountant Bernal de Pisa, was put down. Columbus arrested Pisa and hanged several other mutineers (Deagan 1992:48). In 1496, Columbus returned to Spain leaving his brother Bartolomew in charge of the colony. One of the first things Bartolomew did was to begin relocating colonists from La Isabela to the south coast of Hispaniola (Parry and Sherlock 1971:8). Here, he founded Santo Domingo. Santo Domingo provided a better harbor, healthier climate, and was located closer to the majority of the gold fields being exploited by the colonists.

Before Bartolomew left for Santo Domingo, he appointed Francisco Roldán to be in charge of the settlement at La Isabela. With Roldán as mayor, the end of La Isabela came quickly. Francisco Roldán and his followers at La Isabela took advantage of the Columbus brothers absence and revolted against their authority. Outfitted with supplies from the storehouses at La Isabela, Roldán and his followers allied themselves with several Amerindian *caciques* and left La Isabela permanently (Deagan 1992:51). Settling in the western part of Hispaniola, Roldán and his followers refused to recognize the authority of the Columbus brothers until 1498, when Roldán reached a tenuous peace through negotiations with Christopher Columbus upon his return to Hispaniola from Spain.

By 1498, La Isabela was deserted. The economic focus of the colony centered on the Cibao region and the south coast. The area around La Isabela was no longer an important colonial center. A few towns remained viable on the north coast of

Hispaniola, but little land beyond their pale was cultivated. A few *estancias* (ranches) were probably in operation in the area of Luperón during the sixteenth century, but little is documented concerning the economic life in the region between 1498 and 1606.

### Luperón during the Interim Years: 1500-1863

#### Luperón and the Trade in Contraband

The many natural harbors and inlets around the port towns of Monte Cristi and Puerto Plata became centers for smuggling goods into the colony during the sixteenth century. At the time this area was known as the *banda del norte*, which referred to the north coast region stretching from present day Haiti to the eastern edge of Puerto Plata province (Moya Pons 1977:112). The rugged coast of Luperón, with its many suitable beaches, was utilized as a place for the unloading of illegal commerce throughout the sixteenth century. One common method of trade, likely engaged in by the inhabitants living in the region around Luperón, was sloop-trade. C. H. Haring described this trade as being "managed by sloops which hovered near some secluded spot on the coast, often at the mouth of a river, and informed the inhabitants of their presence in the neighbourhood by firing a shot from a cannon" (1966:27). The inhabitants would then row out to these sloops and trade locally produced goods such as beef, leather, ginger, and sugar for imported merchandise which the English, Portuguese, French, and Dutch merchants had on board.

One documented account of Luperón's shores being utilized by smugglers is the case of the Englishman Captain John Hawkins. Captain Hawkins is known to history as a slaver, part-time privateer, part-time trader, and later, as an English naval hero who helped defeat the Spanish Armada in 1588. In 1563, he arrived in the Caribbean with three hundred slaves which he had purchased from the Portuguese in Sierra Leone,

West Africa. He went to the north coast of Española and wanted to trade legally with the Spanish authorities. Attempting to trade at Puerto Plata, he was "officially" warned that this was prohibited and expelled from the port by local colonial authorities. Sailing further to the west, he landed at La Isabela, now virtually abandoned, and completed the exchange with the full cognizance of the Spanish authorities in Puerto Plata. He traded his slaves for a large volume of sugar and hides.

He had hoped to initiate normal trading relations with the Spanish colonial officials of Santo Domingo and made sure to pay all the local import duties and taxes required by law. Believing that the Spanish government would not molest his cargo, he even went so far as to send half his purchase of hides back to Europe on Spanish ships. Furthermore, he left one hundred slaves in Hispaniola on deposit with the colonial authorities of the island (Haring 1966:38). To Hawkins dismay, the authorities in Spain refused to honor the arrangement and ordered the slaves left on Hispaniola as forfeit to punish him for trading illegally (Moya Pons 1977:102). Spain was not yet ready to allow its monopoly on trade with its colonies to be broken.

Little else is known about Luperón during the sixteenth century. One can safely assume that other foreign traders landed on its shores in their quest to circumnavigate the Spanish monopoly on trade with the residents of Española. Parry and Sherlock mention that Isabela played a prominent role in the north coast's illicit trade during the sixteenth century:

Isabela, Columbus's early foundation on the north coast of Hispaniola, was a favorite and characteristic haunt of smugglers. The place had dwindled to a mere hamlet, but behind it lay a fertile region of ranches and sugar plantations known then as La Vega, where slaves were in high demand and where return cargoes of sugar and hides could be obtained. The area was separated from Santo Domingo by a wide stretch of rough country, and the danger of official interference was very small. The activities of smugglers, by their nature, are not officially recorded so long as they are successful, so that evidence is scanty; but there is little doubt that considerable numbers of slaves entered the West Indies by such channels; and with the slaves came cargoes of European goods—wine, oil, tools, cloth,

paper, and so one—from Teneriffe, Las Palmas, or Lisbon itself.  
(1971:28-29)

From the previous passage, one can deduce that the case of Captain Hawkins was not an isolated incident.

How many inhabitants did the region around Luperón support during the sixteenth century? What were their occupations? The historical record is largely blank. One can only surmise that involvement in the lucrative smuggling business directly employed a number of the inhabitants. Others may have hunted feral cattle for their hides. Others, still, likely cultivated small plots of land to meet their subsistence needs.

It is probable that Luperón was the home for one or more *hatos* (ranches), where tame stock, referred to as *mansa*, were raised. G. A. Mejía, in his Historia de Santo Domingo, cited Bartolomé Cepero y Gaspar de Xuara's "Memorial de 1608" as claiming that the whole *banda del norte* contained no fewer than one hundred and twenty ranches at the end of the sixteenth century (1952:573). The fertile soils, well-watered by the Bajabonico river, would have been an excellent region for cattle and horse breeding. These activities play an important economic role in the region today and it is likely they did the same at an earlier time.

While there is no supporting evidence, it is possible that some of the local inhabitants would have worked as muleteers during the sixteenth century. Since no roads capable of handling wheeled vehicles were in existence, this type of occupation would have been a necessity to transport contraband inland and to bring agricultural products from the Cibao, such as sugar and hides, over the Cordillera Septentrional to the coast. One of the major routes would have been through the "Puerta de los Hidalgos," the mountain pass established by Columbus in 1494, which was still one of the main routes between the Cibao and Puerto Plata during the latter part of the nineteenth century (Hazard 1873:372).



Smuggling was so prevalent along the north coast of Hispaniola during the sixteenth century that Spanish authorities sought to curtail its existence by draconian measures. In 1603, Spain initiated a policy designed to thwart smuggling. Royal mandates (*cédulas*) decreed that all towns of the *banda del norte* should be destroyed and their inhabitants removed, forcibly if necessary, to either the south coast near Santo Domingo, or to sites in the interior such as Santiago and La Vega. The royal mandates of August 6, August 7, August 23, October 15, November 29, and December 12, 1603, were rigidly enforced between 1605 and 1606 by colonial authorities under the leadership of Governor Antonio Osorio (Rodríguez Demorizi 1945:115).

Monte Cristi, Puerto Plata, La Yaguana, Bayajá, and San Juan de la Maguana were the five major towns in the northern and western parts of the island ordered destroyed. The *cédulas* of October 15, 1603, and November 29, 1603, specifically referred to the destruction of the town of Puerto Plata, its depopulation, and the resettlement of those inhabitants residing in, or near, its environs (Lugo 1938:116-117). The plans called for the residents of Puerto Plata to be resettled in the south, along with the unwilling immigrants from Monte Cristi, in one location near Santo Domingo. Forced to move, they founded the town of Montepata (Peña Pérez 1985:143). It is unlikely that this resettlement policy yielded much by the way of increased revenue for the Spanish Crown as "within the region, fields were left uncultivated, and the farms were depopulated; the houses were going to ruin, with closed doors, their occupants having deserted them; the duties and taxes that could be collected by the Government amounted to absolutely nothing" (Hazard 1873:65).

#### La Despoblación: Luperón in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Little is known about the region of Luperón during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Written history records almost nothing about the region except

that the coastline was on the charts of ship captains who plied the waters of northern Hispaniola. It was not until the early 1700s that information about the region of Luperón again appears in the historical record.

The Spanish were fearful in the first half of the eighteenth century that the rapid population growth of Saint-Domingue would soon make it impossible for the small numbers of Spanish colonists living in Santo Domingo to successfully resist future French attempts to gain control of all of Española. The Spanish authorities began to augment the depleted population of Santo Domingo by offering free passage and land to any Spanish citizens willing to emigrate.

The Spanish Crown sent the first fifty families to be resettled in 1720, and sent seventy-eight families more in 1725 (Moya Pons 1974:9). Immigrants from the Canary Islands were selected because it was believed that they were more acclimated to the climate of Santo Domingo than people from the Iberian peninsula (Moya Pons 1977:285). The new immigrants were resettled throughout the depopulated regions of Santo Domingo. It was largely with a nucleus of these Canary Islanders that the *banda del norte* was repopulated in the early and middle part of the eighteenth century. Forty families from the Canaries were sent to settle Puerto Plata in 1737. In 1751, 200 more families arrived in Santo Domingo and half of these were sent to repopulate Monte Cristi, while the other half were sent to Puerto Plata (Moya Pons 1974:9).

The city of Puerto Plata was re-established after being deserted of human inhabitants for almost one hundred and forty years. During this time, Puerto Plata had frequently been a staging ground for attacks by both the Spaniards and the filibusters. The Spanish marshalled their forces at Puerto Plata and sailed from that port for their successful attack on the French stronghold of Tortuga in 1654. A combined force of French and English buccaneers landed at Puerto Plata in 1659, and proceeded inland to attack the town of St. Jago (Yago), where they pillaged for twenty-four hours, before

being forced to return to the coast by the arrival of Spanish reinforcements (Haring 1966:115).

Throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Hispaniola's northern coast, with its many natural harbors and bays, provided a safe haven for the small boats and ships of many navies. Figure 2, is a copy of a map printed in Charlevoix's Histoire de l'Isle Espagnole (1732). It clearly delineates each bay located along the shores of Hispaniola. All the bays in the province of present day Puerto Plata are marked. Both the Bay of La Isabela (Puerta Isabella) and Luperón's Bahía de Gracias (Puerto Cavallo) are clearly marked, which indicates that at that time they were viewed as safe and important anchorages by the maritime powers sailing those shores during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Table 1: Population of Puerto Plata Province 1739 - 1920

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Population</u> |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 1739        | 500               |
| 1769        | 1,185             |
| 1782        | 9,900             |
| 1819        | 4,534             |
| 1908        | 56,000            |
| 1920        | 58,923            |

Source: Moya Pons 1974. Nuevas consideraciones sobre la historia de la población dominicana: curvas, tasas y problemas. EME EME Estudios Dominicanos 3(15):23-26.

The right of free trade had been accorded the ports of Puerto Plata and Monte Cristi by the Spanish Crown in 1756 (Hazard 1873:177). Soon thereafter the port of Puerto Plata began to prosper and the number of its inhabitants increased rapidly as increased trade opportunities lured both Dominicans and foreign merchants to the town. Table 1 shows that in 1769, there were 1,185 inhabitants living in Puerto Plata. By 1782, there were almost 10,000 people living there. The population figure for 1782 should be





reviewed with some skepticism. It is not clear in the article by Moya Pons whether the figure of 10,000 represents the gross population for the district of Puerto Plata, or for the port town. The former is much more likely. Nonetheless, by 1782, the economic importance of Puerto Plata had been firmly reestablished.

When Moreau de Saint-Mery visited Puerto Plata in the late eighteenth century he observed a region (*cantón*) which he believed to be rich in gold, silver, and copper mines (Moreau de Saint-Mery 1944:199). He also stated that gypsum was found in the region. Puerto Plata is not a rich mining region and, except for quantities of amber, has few minerals of commercial value. It could have been that mineral ore from the interior was shipped from Puerto Plata during the late eighteenth century, leading Moreau de Saint-Mery to believe the district was the source of these minerals.

Moreau de Saint-Mery made the following observations concerning Puerto Plata. He estimated that the population was between 2,000 and 2,500 (Moreau de Saint-Mery 1944:200). This figure is substantially less than the figure given by Moya Pons. This supports my argument that the figure cited by Moya Pons represents the district's population. He also mentioned that the citizens of Puerto Plata had the bad habit of drinking the water of a fever-laden river, which resulted in many of the populace suffering from a variety of illnesses (Moreau de Saint-Mery 1944:200). When Moreau de Saint-Mery visited in 1788, the town was going through a construction boom. Townspeople were in the process of constructing a large Catholic church and he mentioned that the town had wide avenues lined by stone buildings (Moreau de Saint-Mery 1944:200).

After his visit to Puerto Plata, Moreau de Saint-Mery continued his journey west sailing along the coast of the *municipio* of Luperón. He entered the harbor at Cambiaso, which was then called "el Gran Puerto Souffleur" (Moreau de Saint-Mery 1944:201). He describes the sentinel rock, still standing in the middle of the bay,

perfectly. He visited Luperón's bay, the Bahía de Gracias, which was then called Puerto Caballo, and wrote the following:

El puerto Caballo sería uno de los más bellos y mejores de esa costa, si la entrada fuera suficientemente profunda; pero no tiene sino nueve pies de agua y un bajo la divida. En él se encuentra un carenero. El navegante goza allí de una perfecta calma y si ruido sordo se deja oír, a penas, en lontananza, eso le hace sospechar que una tempestad excita la furia de las olas. (Moreau de Saint-Mery 1944:201)

The narrow entrance and shallow waters prohibited larger ships from entering the bay, as it still does today. However, the Bahía de Gracias was already being used as a place to dry dock smaller boats for hull repairs. It was also used as a place of refuge by smaller vessels when storms lashed the north coast of Hispaniola. Throughout Moreau de Saint-Mery's voyage along the coast of Luperón he gives detailed accounts of the littoral geography, but he mentions nothing about those individuals who inhabit the region. It is likely that a few hardy ranchers (*hateros*) and subsistence farmers inhabited the region, but no information is available to validate this conjecture.

After Moreau de Saint-Mery's geographical descriptions of Luperón's shore line and bays, written in 1788, the historical record again disappears for 70 years. One can only assume that during the period of strife between the British, French, Spanish, and the slave revolt in Saint-Domingue led by Toussaint L'Overture which resulted in Haitian independence (1793-1804), people lived in the region of Luperón. The histories concerning the Haitian conquest and domination of Santo Domingo (1822-1844) make no mention of the region or its inhabitants. It is not until 1863 that *luperonenses* again come into the historical record. This is the period which Dominicans refer to as the War of Restoration.

The War of Restoration (1861-1864) marks the historical beginnings of the town of Luperón. It was during these two years of bitter warfare that the importance of the Bahía de Gracias as a safe location for the de-embarkation of war materials was realized. *Luperonenses* consider the year 1863 as the year their town was founded.

According to local historians, the Puerto Cantonal de Blanco was founded by sailors and soldiers fighting against the Spanish troops. In 1863, arms shipped to the soldiers fighting under General Gregorio Luperón were being landed near the present location of Luperón. Previously, the bay had been called Bahía de Gracias (the name given by Columbus) or Puerto Caballo (the name foreigners had used since the seventeenth century). In 1830, British naval Captain Richard Owen had explored the anchorages of the north coast and had concluded that Puerto Caballo, while having a narrow entrance, offered better protection as a harbor than those of Puerto Plata or Isabela (quoted in Rodríguez Demorizi 1958:321). It was in this secure, but secluded location, that much of the ordinance used by the Dominicans fighting the Spanish in the Cibao and Puerto Plata district was off-loaded.

#### The Town of Blanco and the *Municipio* of Luperón 1863 - 1950

Luperón experienced a period of growth as more settlers came into the area during the last half of the nineteenth century. Sources from this period are extremely limited, but oral histories from several descendants of the first inhabitants of the *municipio* help give an idea of the social life during this period. The rich lands near the Bajabonico river were ideal for crops and pasture. This land was occupied quite early in the nineteenth century by several large landowners devoted to cattle raising and horse breeding. The small village of Blanco founded in 1863, and located on the shores of the Bahía de Gracias, remained a small agricultural community throughout the nineteenth century. Local historians informed me that even in the 1860s the principal crops were tobacco and maize. The introduction of the road and, later, the railway was to make the transportation of agricultural produce to the markets of Puerto Plata and Santiago much easier in the last years of the century. The vast majority of small landowners during the late nineteenth century raised both subsistence crops and a least

one cash crop . Typically, the small farmer in the region would grow either tobacco or cotton for the market.

The origin of the name Blanco for the town is still a source of mystery for its present inhabitants. Several inhabitants knowledgeable in the historical lore of the community offered contrasting views concerning its origin. The least likely explanation, offered by one older inhabitant, is that the name was given to the town because of the white sands found on the beaches along the coasts near the town. A more plausible explanation, offered independently by two inhabitants, one a well read teacher in the community who has had several students write papers on the subject, and the other being an older storekeeper who has lived his whole life in the town and maintained a strong interest in its history, states the name Blanco was given to the village in honor of the principal landowner of the area during the 1860s. It is interesting to note that while several of the street names found in the town of Luperón today honor early inhabitants of the community, such as Calle Juanico Cueto and Calle Francisco Morrobel, but there is no street called Blanco. Five different individuals, whose knowledge of the region's history was quite broad, all told me that the principal landowner in the 1860s was Francisco Morrobel, the same individual who had a street named in his honor. Who was Blanco? This remains a mystery. Even Mario Concepción, who wrote an interesting article on place names in the Dominican Republic, only identifies Blanco as the original name of the town and that it was changed to Luperón in 1927 to honor of the most famous of *puertoplateños*, Gregorio Luperón (1975:102).

The travel account of Samuel Hazard gives an insight into the life of the region as it was in 1873. On his journey from Santiago to Puerto Plata, Hazard traversed the lands now included within the boundaries of the *municipio*. In the following passage he described the land and the agricultural practices of its inhabitants living inland in the region at the time:



We were on the bottom lands along the coast, where we met with plenty of natural clearings on the hillside or in the bottoms. Most of these were occupied by settlers, growing tobacco, coffee (wild), the plantain, and a great deal of fine cotton - fine staple and good length. One of these places presented quite an American appearance, the house having piazzas, and the first grape-vine-covered arbour I had seen on the island. The soil everywhere was of the best black loam, unmistakable in its richness, and capable, as all the inhabitants told me, of producing everything in the shape of vegetation. . . .

All the people of this section devote themselves principally to the tobacco culture, paying no attention to cattle, though they own large numbers of hogs. These are allowed to run wild and take care of themselves, and this they have learned to do to such an extent, that every spot where there is anything planted has to be surrounded with a strong fence of withes to prevent their entrance. (Hazard 1873:373)

Continuing on his journey to the ruins of La Isabela, he mentions the thick foliage and extensive growth of hardwood trees found in the area (Hazard 1873:375). Logging constituted an important source of employment for many of the inhabitants living along the coast, with mahogany and fustic being the most sought after timber (Hazard 1873:375). While the timber was cut with the most elementary of tools, no saw was used according to Hazard, this local industry was part of an international enterprise (Hazard 1873:375). Hazard described the industry as being conducted in the following manner:

This shipping of mahogany is quite a business with the coast people, as they haul or float these logs down to some convenient bay or inlet, where smaller vessels or lighters convey them to the larger ports for shipment abroad; and in some cases, where the size of the bay permits it, the large vessels themselves come up and load directly at the port. (Hazard 1873:375)

Hazard was impressed by the fertility of the land that he crossed in 1873. However, he found the coast around La Isabela a disappointment. Of the ruins at La Isabela he wrote; "there was absolutely nothing to repay me for my trouble, the place possessing no natural beauty, and the few ruins remaining having no particular form or meaning" (Hazard 1873:377). Furthermore, he claimed the place to be a breeding ground for fever (*calentura*) because it was marshy (Hazard 1873:377). This was remarkably observant since it was written before the knowledge that such fevers (yellow fever and

malaria to name only two) were transmitted by the mosquito. Marshy areas, such as those around La Isabela, would have been prime breeding grounds for these insects.

Hazard gives us some clues about the lifestyles of the settlers living in Luperón during the late nineteenth century. Traveling along the Bajabonico river, he wrote about two distinct groups of inhabitants living in the region. The first group was composed of native Dominicans, who lived in simple huts (*bohios*), and worked as wood cutters or cultivated small plots of tobacco, plantains, coffee, and subsistence crops. Individual members of this group were described by Hazard as being negroes, signifying that they were predominantly dark skinned (Hazard 1873:381). The other group was referred to by Hazard as "planters." Some of the planters were immigrants from the United States, such as the mulatto from South Carolina that Hazard met. The "planters" lived in larger houses made of wood (Hazard 1873:378). One can assume that they were more prosperous since they were engaged in the lumber business, trading for mahogany and other timber, but Hazard has little else favorable to say of them (Hazard 1873:378). While writing little positive of the people living in Luperón, Hazard found the land to be especially attractive:

In all the north coast tract of country, from its rich soil, its fine climate, abundance of water, and general capacity to produce every tropical plant, I should say it was the most desirable part of the island, being exposed daily to the refreshing northern trade-winds. (Hazard 1873:382)

Little else is known about the region during the last decades of the nineteenth century, or during the first couple of decades of the twentieth century. In 1905, Dominican President Morales signed a decree allowing the United States to place Dominican customs under U.S. administration (Kryzanek and Wiarda 1988:31). This was the first step towards direct U.S. manipulation of Dominican affairs. U.S. President Wilson, citing political instability and failure to pay foreign debts, authorized the formal occupation of the Dominican Republic in 1916. The United States was to

remain in direct control of the Dominican Republic for the next eight years, withdrawing its troops in 1924.

One thing the U.S. military government did while it occupied the Dominican Republic was to conduct the first national census in 1920. This document provides some interesting information about the province of Puerto Plata and the *común* of Blanco, as the *municipio* of Luperón was called at the time. The population living in the province of Puerto Plata in 1920 was 58,923 inhabitants and represented 6.6 per cent of the Dominican Republic's total population (GPRD 1975:124). The province of Puerto Plata was divided into four *comunes* which were subdivided into 69 *secciones* (GPRD 1975:143). The four *comunes* had the following population totals: Puerto Plata, 25966; Altamira, 11467; Bajabonico (Imbert), 8145; and Blanco (Luperón), 13345 (GPRD 1975:143).

The population of Blanco represented just under 23 per cent of the province's population at that time. The *común* of Bajabonico, its neighbor to the north, contained only 14 per cent of the population. The low population density of *común* Bajabonico can be partially explained because the large sugar plantation and processing plant Ingenio Amistad located in the *común* had much of the arable land under cultivation. The expansion of small farms in the *común* was limited by the size of the large sugar plantation. The fact that a large foreign owned sugar plantation was located in the *común* of Bajabonico would also explain why this *común* had the second highest percentage of foreigners living in the province; some would have been employed as technicians and managers sent to oversee the operation by the owners, the South Puerto Rico Sugar Co., while a large number of the field workers are likely to have been Haitians (GPRD 1975:157).

In 1920, the port of Puerto Plata was still the busiest port in the country in terms of tonnage handled. Over 423,363 tons of materials passed through the port in 1920 (GPRD 1975:108). The number of ships entering the harbor in 1920 was only 171.

The other major ports of the island handled the following number of ships: Santo Domingo (314), San Pedro de Macorís (328), and La Romana (181) (GPRD 1975:108). These ships handled a larger number of vessels, but the vessels visiting these ports must have been loaded with smaller cargoes. The port of Blanco (Luperón) is listed in the 1920 census as being an excellent port, but whose narrow interior makes the maneuvering of large ships difficult (GPRD 1975:3). It is interesting to note that even in 1920 the harbor was still being officially referred to as both Puerto Caballo or Puerto de Gracias. This is the last official reference to the harbor as Puerto Caballo. No inhabitant living in the region today even remembers when it was called Puerto Caballo, nor was it listed on any official maps printed after 1920 as Puerto Caballo.

In 1920, Puerto Plata province had the second highest percentage of land usage, 63.2 percent, in all the nation (GPRD 1975:141). Only the province of Espaillat, with 76.3 percent of its land under cultivation, exceeded this total (GPRD 1975:141). The province of Espaillat was the smallest province in the nation at that time in area, but it had the highest population density in the country with 60 inhabitants per square kilometer (GPRD 1975:127). Puerto Plata, on the other hand, was tied for third place with the province of Santiago, having a population density of 34 inhabitants per square kilometer (GPRD 1975:127).

The *común* of Blanco, with its 526.64 square kilometers of land and a population of 13,345 inhabitants, had a much lower population density than was the norm for Puerto Plata, having only 25.34 inhabitants per square kilometer. The *común* was listed as having 2,890 individuals who had the right to vote in 1920 (GPRD 1975:149). However, the total population of voting age totaled 4,919 individuals (GPRD 1975:157). In the Dominican Republic an *acta de nacimiento* (birth certificate) is a prerequisite to obtaining a *cédula* (identity card) and an individual must have a valid *cédula* to vote. It costs a small sum of money to obtain both of these documents,



money that many individuals might not have been able to spare on the luxury of voting; hence, the discrepancy in numbers of registered versus eligible voters in the region.

Racially, the population of Blanco is recorded as being composed of 2,929 whites (22%), 1,893 blacks (14%), and 8,523 mulatto or *indio* (64%) (GPRD 1975:157). There was little difference in the ratio of males to females living in the *común*, with 6,742 males (50.5%) living in the *común* versus 6603 females (49.5%) (GPRD 1975:157). The population of Blanco was young, with over 63 percent of the population being under the age of 21 (GPRD 1975:157). The population was predominantly Catholic (at least professing to be members of this faith, they may not have been legitimately baptized as Catholics), but there were also 144 Protestants living in the *común* (GPRD 1975:157). This was the second highest concentration of Protestants in all the *comunes* in the province, only Puerto Plata had more.

The population of Blanco was fairly literate for the period. Over 23 percent of the adults were listed as being able to read (GPRD 1975:157). While this does not sound very impressive, comparing it to the *común* of Altamira where only 17 percent of the adults were literate, or to Bajabonico (Imbert), where 21 percent of the adults could read, shows that, for a rural *común*, the population of Blanco did possess a higher percentage of educated individuals than other rural areas in the province (GPRD 1975:157). Not surprisingly, Blanco surpassed both of the above mentioned *comunes* in the number of schools within its borders (19), and in the number of classrooms these schools contained (34) (GPRD 1975:118).

#### Blanco is Renamed Luperón: The *Municipio* during the Years 1927 - 1960.

In 1927, the *común* changed its name from Blanco to Luperón. The town of Blanco also chose to change its name to honor General Gregorio Luperón. There seems to have been a popular movement during this period throughout the province of Puerto Plata to

honor past heroes of the Republic. In 1925, the *común* of Bajabonico changed its name to Imbert to honor José María Imbert, a famous general who had defeated the Haitian army in 1844 at Santiago, ensuring the independence of the Dominican Republic (Concepción 1975:101).

In 1930, Generalísimo Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina became president of the Dominican Republic. This marked the beginning of thirty-one years of dictatorship. His control over the nation would only end with his assassination on May 30, 1961, along a deserted highway between Ciudad Trujillo (the capitol had been renamed in his honor in 1936) and one of his favorite estates in San Cristóbal. Trujillo had an appetite unparalleled in Dominican history for wealth and honors. At the time of his death, Trujillo was believed to have been one of the richest men in the world, with an estimated fortune between several hundred million and a billion dollars (Black 1986a:27).

The Dominican Republic experienced an economic boom period during the 1940s and 1950s, but most of this economic growth was to benefit Trujillo and his family. By the end of his regime, it is estimated that 50-60 percent of all arable land belonged to Trujillo or members of his family, and that Trujillo-owned businesses accounted for approximately 80 percent of the volume of business in Ciudad Trujillo alone (Wiarda 1969:40). The sugar plantation and the Ingenio Amistad in Imbert belonged to the son of Trujillo, Ramfis. Actually, Ramfis owned all the sugar *centrales* on the north coast at Catarey, Esperanza, Monte Llano, and Amistad, which he sold to the Bank of Agricultural and Industrial Credit for \$25 million dollars before he left the country in 1961. The cotton plantations located in the *municipio* of Luperón at Las Paredes and along the Bajabonico river at Los Bellosos also became property of the "Benefactor de la Patria, Padre de la Patria Nueva, Benefactor de la Iglesia, and the first architect, artist, doctor, scholar, educator, etc., of the Nation" during the course of his reign.

Under Trujillo, the "official" standard of living of the country is considered to have risen. This was due to the introduction of increased mechanization, increased human

productivity, and expanding foreign markets (Rodman 1964:137). However, the standard of living for the average Dominican actually improved little or worsened (Rodman 1964:137). It was through economic power that Trujillo most efficiently controlled his opposition. Estimates are that three-quarters of the employed population in the Dominican Republic worked for Trujillo either in government jobs, or on his vast assortment of agricultural, commercial, and industrial enterprises, and in this manner became obedient followers to his wishes "since the most efficient method of terror is hunger" (Wiarda 1969:41).

This economic strangle hold Trujillo held on common citizens is illustrated in the story one of my informants in Luperón told me. During the 1940s, a local landowner had a beautiful white horse that was his favorite. One day a military general saw the horse and mentioned that Trujillo was an admirer of fine horses. Once this passing remark was made the landowner had no choice but to send the horse to Trujillo as a personal gift, because if he had failed to do so, his land, animals, and possibly his life would have been forfeit. My informant mentioned that this was not an isolated case; the best of everything was reserved exclusively for Trujillo and his family.

In 1950, the third national census was conducted. It is interesting to note that Trujillo was listed on the cover of this document as the "Creator of the National Statistical Service," another of his many laudatory titles. This census was much more descriptive than the one conducted in 1920. Luperón had grown substantially during the interim. In 1950, the population density per square kilometer for the province of Puerto Plata had risen to 71.1, compared to the 34 per sq. kilometer in 1920 (ONC 1950:XV). There were 33,790 inhabitants living in the *común* of Luperón in 1950; with 1,039 listed as living in urban areas (town of Luperón), and 32,751 being classified as living in a rural setting (ONC 1950:2). The males to female ratio had hardly changed since 1920; with 17,717 males (51%) living in Luperón, and 16,613 females (49%). The population

density of the *común* was still lower than the average for the province; being only 64.2 inhabitants per square kilometer (ONC 1950:5).

One of the most significant, and interesting, changes that had occurred in Luperón between 1920 and 1950 was in its racial composition. The 1920 census had listed the population as being 22 percent white, 14 percent black, and 64 percent mulatto or *indio*. The 1950 population is described as being 14 percent white, only 4 percent black, and 82 percent mulatto or *indio* (ONC 1950:64-69). This represents either a significant change from the population described in 1920. Did the population of Luperón intermarry freely in the thirty years since 1920, changing the racial composition of the *común*, or more likely, was there a difference in how the 1950 census takers classified individuals from those during the 1920 census. Perhaps the 1920 census takers, following instructions from their U.S. masters, classified individuals solely based on phenotype, or physical characteristics; while the 1950 census takers, like many Latin Americans, also made their decisions based on wealth, education, and social background. If this was true, it would explain the large variation in racial composition between the two censuses.

The 1950 census provides a picture of the social structure of the *común* during the height of the Trujillo dictatorship. The social structure of the *común* at the time reflects the following: approximately 14 percent of the inhabitants were listed as being legally married, and another 17 percent lived together in stable common-law households listed in the census as *uniones estables de facto* (ONC 1950:73). Two percent of the population were listed as widows or widowers; in this category widows composed 69 percent of the total. The longer life expectancy of females, and the fact that many of the men would immediately remarry or look for another partner to cohabit with them in order to have someone to tend the household, would explain the higher number of widows. Sixty-seven percent of the population was listed as single (ONC 1950:73). This figure is misleading since both adults and dependent children below the age of fifteen are counted in this category.



The *común* had a small foreign born population living in it in 1950. There was one male Spaniard living in the town of Luperón (ONC 1950:163). In the rural zone, a wide variety of nationalities were represented even though the total number of foreigners in the *común* was small. There were 21 foreign born inhabitants living in rural areas of the *común* (ONC 1950:172-177). There were three Cuban males, four Spanish males, four Puerto Rican males, three Haitians (two males, one female), two Syrian males, two Venezuelans (one male, one female), one female U.S. citizen, one English female, and one Lebanese male. Unfortunately, nothing more is stated in the census information about these foreigners and their occupations.

The town of Luperón contained 1,039 inhabitants living in 234 households (ONC 1950:790). These inhabitants were divided into 169 households headed by males and 65 households headed by females; the average number of related individuals living in each of these households was three (ONC 1950:790-791); however, the average household density was 4.44 indicating a significant portion of the population lived with non-relatives in the town of Luperón. In the rural areas of the *común*, the average size of the household was slightly smaller with 3.9 individuals living under each roof (ONC 1950:794-795). Fecundity of child-bearing women in the *común* over the age of 15 was 5.18 children, with the 6,094 women in listed in this category giving birth to 31,572 children (ONC 1950:359).

Literacy had decreased slightly since 1920. In 1950, only 22 percent of the population had attended school. Of those who had attended school, 93 percent had left by the end of the fourth grade (ONC 1950:232-233). Only nine inhabitants living in Luperón are listed in the census as having finished secondary school. Also, nine individuals in the *común* had some type of university training, with four individuals having completed six years of higher education (ONC 1950:232-233). The 1950 census states that there were only 31 teachers practicing in the *común* (ONC 1950:512-513). The census provided the interesting information that some *luperonenses* going on for

advanced education opted for the following type of professional training: nine students chose to study business; eight music; and one male student was studying languages (ONC 1950:303).

The 1950 census shows that Luperón was still predominantly an agricultural region. Occupational status was one category which clearly highlighted this agrarian focus of the *común*. There were 225 people working for the government in 1950 (ONC 1950:393). Of these 225 individuals, five were listed as being judges, lawyers, and legal aides, thirty are listed as clerical workers, and the others were listed as administrators, managers, and staff on government payroll (ONC 1950:393). Other important occupations listed in the census include the following: 149 domestics (servants); 87 small merchants and itinerant peddlers; 16 transportation professionals (truck drivers, taxi drivers, etc.); 5 individuals working in medical professions; 5 lawyers and/or judges; 4 professional woodcutters; and 9864 individuals working either as farmers, ranchers, or agricultural laborers (ONC 1950:393). Of these 9864 individuals, 6586 are listed as farmers and ranchers implying that they at least owned some land (ONC 1950:513). The other 3274 individuals listed in this category might have been day laborers, share-croppers, or both, the census does not make this clear (ONC 1950:393). Another 128 individuals are listed as workers in the tobacco or alimentary occupations (ONC 1950:395). Most likely these workers were involved in the tobacco industry, either in the curing process or in the manufacture of cigars, since this is still an important agricultural product in the region. There were no inhabitants listed in the 1950 census as being fishermen. This is interesting since several fishermen presently living in Luperón told me that they learned their trade from their fathers who had been fishing all their lives in the coastal waters off Luperón, including during the period of the Trujillo dictatorship. Perhaps, the census takers took their information from the official records listing permits purchased. Presently, local fishermen, being poor, have a tendency to avoid buying official fishing permits unless forced to do so; this might have been true in the time of Trujillo as well. Another

possible explanation for the lack of documented fishermen in 1950 is that when asked the fishermen were asked their occupations by the census takers, they, being conscious of the low status associated with fishing, gave other occupations as being their principal source of income.

The census of 1950 listed 6,726 houses in the *común* of Luperón (ONC 1950:800). There were 235 houses situated in town of Luperón of which all but one was occupied. The remaining 6,491 houses were spread throughout the rural zones of the *común*, from Cambiaso to Estero Hondo (ONC 1950:802). Of the 235 houses in Luperón, only one had walls constructed of concrete blocks, 34 had walls made of hard wood, 118 had palm siding, and 82 are listed as having "other" siding (ONC 1950:802). I interpret this "other" siding as being yagua palm panels, since this is a common construction material used by poorer inhabitants of the *municipio* today .

The town of Luperón in 1950 had one building listed as a hotel, three buildings listed as businesses, and two structures not defined which most likely were government buildings such as the police or *guardia* station and town hall (ONC 1950:809). All the 6,726 houses in the *común* had no running water, nor were there any public taps (ONC 1950:815). Eleven houses in the *común* had water tanks, 272 households obtained their water from wells, 350 households sought their water from natural springs, and the vast majority of households, 5,995, obtained their water from arroyos and rivers (ONC 1950:815).

The townspeople of Luperón received their water principally from wells, springs, and local streams (ONC 1950:817). Indoor plumbing fixtures were a rarity in the town of Luperón. Only one house is listed as having an indoor toilet. There were 231 latrines in the town and three houses had no sanitary facilities listed; one can assume that they used the facilities of their neighbors or relatives (ONC 1950:823). Electricity was available in the town and 53 houses had electric lights. The other 182 households relied on kerosene lamps to illuminate their homes (ONC 1950:829). Most houses in the town of Luperón

consisted of two or three rooms, but there were 39 houses that had five rooms, eight houses with six rooms, and three large houses with nine rooms (ONC 1950:836).

The census of 1950 gives us a composite picture of Luperón as a predominantly rural, agricultural region. Industry, aside from agricultural enterprises, was non-existent. Infrastructural development of the *común* had not progressed beyond building a few roads for the transportation of goods and for the quick movement of military personnel. Water lines had yet to be installed and electricity was available only to a few residents of the *común* living in the town of Luperón and its immediate vicinity. In short, the *común* of Luperón had all the characteristics of a rural agrarian backwater isolated from world events. However, this was not true. In 1949, the region of Luperón was driven by force into the limelight of national and international news.

In 1949, the town of Luperón was the location where members of Liberation Army of America (Ejército de Liberación de America) chose to start an uprising to overthrow Trujillo.<sup>5</sup> A small plane carrying fifteen individuals landed on the Bahía de Gracias on the evening of June 19, 1949. A fight broke out between members of the freedom fighters and troops loyal to Trujillo stationed in the town. All the freedom fighter were either captured or killed soon after landing and the forces of the armed opposition were thwarted by Trujillo.

After a decade of planning opposition forces once again attempted to overthrow Trujillo by force. In 1959, the *municipio* of Luperón was again the site of failed invasions by members of the Trujillo opposition. Landing in Estero Hondo, within the borders of the *municipio* of Luperón at that time, and at Maimon( just to the east of Luperón) by boat, freedom fighters were ambushed on the land by Trujillo's *guardia* and attacked by Dominican planes from the air. This invasion force was much larger than in 1949, consisting of at least several hundred men, however, they, too, met the same fate

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<sup>5</sup> I refer those readers interested in learning more details about the invasion of 1949 and 1959 to the section of Appendix B subtitled The Invasions of Luperón: 1949 and 1959.



as the invaders of 1949. Most were killed on the beaches. The rest were imprisoned and executed soon after capture. The Dominicans today honor these individuals as martyrs to the cause of Dominican democracy.

### Luperón: 1960-1989

In the Dominican census of 1960, all the districts of the province of Puerto Plata are no longer called *comunes*. The term *municipio* was adopted and continues to be used to this day. The population of the *municipio* of Luperón had risen by 1960 to 40,067 inhabitants (DGEC 1961a:9). This represented a 18.6 percent increase in the total population over the course of the preceding decade. The population of the town of Luperón increased to 1,548 inhabitants living in 298 domiciles (DGEC 1961a:9). The growth rate of the town population was 49 percent; over two and one-half times the rate of growth for the rural parts of the *municipio*. The average number of persons living in each household had increased from 3.0 in 1950 to 5.19 in 1960.

The population density of the *municipio* had risen to 76.08 per square kilometer by 1960 (DGEC 1961a:16). The whole region is documented to have contained 7,662 houses, with a density of 14.55 houses per square kilometer (DGEC 1961a:16). In the rural *secciones*, the average number of inhabitants per household was 5.23 (DGEC 1961b:13). Of the nine *secciones* in the *municipio*, the variation in household density ranged from a high of 5.7 for the *sección* Unijica, to a low of 4.71 in the *sección* of La Sabana located adjacent to the town of Luperón (DGEC 1961b:13).

In 1961, by the decree of law number 5731, the municipal district of Los Hidalgos was created by taking land away from the *municipio* of Luperón (ONE 1966:109). The three most densely populated *secciones*, located on the far western edge of the *municipio* of Luperón, El Mamey, Marmolejos, and Unijica were united to form Los Hidalgos. In 1961, the newly formed Los Hidalgos had a total population of 14,450 (ONE 1966:93).

The *municipio* of Luperón had been reduce to a population of 25,880 inhabitants (ONE 1966:93). This represented the loss of 36 percent of the *municipio*'s population. The number of houses in the newly down-sized *municipio* of Luperón was 5,145 and each household had an average density of 5.03 occupants (ONE 1966:93).

When the fifth national census was taken in January 1970, the population of the *municipio* of Luperón had risen to 30,421 (ONE 1976a:5). The sex ratio in Luperón at the time was 15,464 males (51.7%) and 14,551 (48.3%) females (ONE 1976a:5). The population of the town of Luperón had grown to 2,046 inhabitants (ONE 1976a:5). The town's population was composed of 986 males (48.2%) and 1,060 females (51.8%) (ONE 1976a:5). The population density for the province of Puerto Plata had risen to 98.9 inhabitants per square kilometer by 1970 (ONE 1976a:xv). The city of Puerto Plata was listed as the eighth largest urban center in the country (ONE 1976a:10). Throughout the province, almost one-half of the population was under the age of 15 (ONE 1976a:38). In the *municipio* of Luperón, the majority of the population (15, 227 individuals or 50 %) was under the age of 15 (ONE 1976a:38). Forty-six percent of the population was between the ages of 15 and 64, while less than four percent of the population was 65 or older (ONE 1976a:38). In the *municipio* of Luperón, the population of children between the ages of 7 and 14 eligible to go to school in 1970 was 7,704 (ONE 1976b:519). Of those eligible to attend school, 4838 matriculated (62.8%), 2355 did not go to school (30.6%), and 511 (6.6%) individuals are listed as information unavailable (ONE 1976b:519).

By 1989, the unofficial population of the *municipio* had risen to 38,000 inhabitants. This is the figure the *síndico* (elected representative) of the *municipio* had obtained in an informal census conducted during the preceding year. According to his figures, there were approximately 6,000 individuals living in urban zones (this refers to the *sección* of Luperón including the town of Luperón and lands immediately adjacent). These figures must be considered as approximations and the official 1990 census information is still not

available. There are a large number of individuals who are registered as residents of the *municipio* for voting purposes, but actually live elsewhere. There are also a number of individuals living in the town of Luperón who work at the Luperón Beach Resort hotel, but are officially registered residents of other *municipios*. This makes all figures for town and *municipio* population size suspect as to their accuracy.

During 1989, the *municipio* of Luperón was once more reduced in size. The *sección* of Estero Hondo and lands west of the Bajabonico river were separated from the *municipio* of Luperón and combined with the municipal district of Los Hidalgos to form the new *municipio* of Isabela. Since that time no new census has been conducted. There was great consternation among the residents of Luperón that the ruins of the archaeological site of La Isabela was to be included in the new *municipio*. Rallies and political pressure from various local political and economic leaders convinced officials in Puerto Plata to allow this part of the *municipio* to remain part of Luperón. Local inhabitants take great pride in their history, but the economic benefits derived from having this site within the confines of the *municipio* were certainly important to motivate some *luperonenses* as well.

### The Introduction of Enclave Tourism in Luperón

The north coast of the Dominican Republic was zoned for tourism development in the late 1960s. Included in the initial plans was a tourist zone radiating outward from the city of Puerto Plata to the east and west, with the westernmost point of the initial zone being the *municipio* of Luperón. The historical interest of Luperón as a tourist attraction has already been described in this chapter, but because of the region's relative isolation from tourist ports of entry, and its lack of facilities to accommodate large numbers of tourists, it was not until the 1980s that the immediate impact of tourism began to be felt.

In the mid-1970s, work on a government designed development plan for the province of Puerto Plata, called the *Proyecto Turístico de Puerto Plata*, was initiated (ALIFD 1977:175). During the first decade of the project, concerns centered on developing the area between the city of Puerto Plata and Sosúa. An international airport, improved roads, potable water supplies, sewage treatment facilities, telecommunications, and a government-run hotel, serving as a training center for future hotel workers, were either constructed from scratch or improved (ALIFD 1977:175). By 1985, there were plans to have approximately 6,000 tourist rooms available for international tourists in Sosúa and Puerto Plata alone (ONAPLAN 1978:122-124).

Initial plans to locate an international tourist resort in the area surrounding Luperón most likely began in the late 1970s, with investors scouting potential locations. Two of the wealthiest individuals in Luperón, brothers, owned a large tract of land located on the western side of the bay's entrance. The land had previously been used for grazing dairy cattle. This land lacked a permanent source of water and, because of its location near the sea, the soil was of a poor quality for growing crops and the brothers were willing to sell the property for a large sum of money. Two rich Dominican investors, with financing from the Banco Cibao, purchased the land totaling over 1,300,000 square meters.

The new owners created a company and called the development project Ciudad Marina. The long term plans for the project include the creation of two first-class international hotels, the Luperón Beach Resort and the Hotel de Cerro, a private marina, an heliport, a professional tennis villa, condominiums, and an eighteen hole golf course designed by Pete Dye. Construction on the project began in 1982. *Luperonenses* who were skilled craftsmen found employment during the construction of Ciudad Marina and, to this day, many local inhabitants still refer to the complex as "*el proyecto*," the project.

When I visited the town in 1986, I found the entrance to Ciudad Marina already closed by guard stations and an barred gate. Roads had been paved in the complex and construction on the Luperón Beach Resort hotel was well underway. Several villas and



condominiums were also under construction to serve as model homes for potential buyers. The town, as yet, had not begun to diversify its economy to accommodate tourists. Gift shops and tourist restaurants were still a thing in the future. In December 1987, the Luperón Beach Resort hotel, with most of its planned 310 rooms completed, opened to the public. Under the management of Dominicana de Hoteles, S.A. (Domitel), the first tourists to arrive came from Canada, Germany, Spain, and Italy. International tourism had arrived in Luperón.

### Conclusion

The advance guard of the "Golden Horde" arriving in Luperón in December 1987, were not the first foreigners to visit the region. The *municipio* had long played a peripheral part in the international struggles and economics of European and North American nations. Founded as the center for the New World colonial hopes of fifteenth century Spain, the *municipio* soon was banished to become a colonial backwater and an haunt for buccaneers and smugglers. But already by the mid-sixteenth century, despite the lack of attention given to the region by colonial authorities or perhaps because of it, the region was heavily involved in international trade, exchanging hides, tobacco, and sugar for the merchandise the Spanish authorities failed to import. During the nineteenth century the region was part of an expanding frontier, a place with rich stands of tropical hardwoods, waiting to be harvested for the international markets of Europe and North America. Those who farmed the area grew a variety of subsistence crops and tobacco or cotton for the market. Both the tobacco and cotton found their way to the industrial centers of northern Europe and North America.

Throughout its long history, the *municipio* of Luperón has been directly or indirectly involved in a global economy. The introduction of tourism into the region today is just a new phase in an already well established historical pattern. While the medium of

exchange differs, with labor being substituted for traditional agricultural products, the introduction of tourism into the rural economy of Luperón provides local residents with a new economic alternative which will be integrated into their existing economic patterns. The time when new lands could be cleared as crop yields diminished in the cleared plots has passed. In an increasingly marginal environment, *luperonense* households have increasingly adopted an economic strategy focused on diversity. In this sense, the introduction of tourism provides some inhabitants the opportunity to find work in a region where traditional alternatives are diminishing all the time.

CHAPTER FOUR  
*LOS LUPERONENSES: LIFE IN  
A COASTAL DOMINICAN TOWN*

A Morning Interlude

It is five-thirty in the morning and there is a slight, damp chill in the February morning. Off to the east, beyond the small rolling hills which surround the community of Luperón, a rich red glow is creeping slowly up on the horizon. Directly overhead the stars can still be plainly seen and the moon is still barely visible. A dog is barking in the distance and roosters are crowing back and forth, not so much in greeting of the day about to begin, but in jousting contests with their unseen rivals. On the town's main avenue, Calle Duarte, the *guagua* (minivan) which makes its daily morning run to Santiago de los Caballeros is stopping at the houses of travellers who yesterday requested to be picked-up. As the doors of the *guagua* are opened a faint sound of merengue music can be heard in the wind. Dawn is the quietest time of the day in Luperón.

Manolo is riding his burro slowly down 27 de Febrero heading for his *conuco* in the western hills surrounding the community. As he passes a small house sided with palm boards and covered by a zinc roof a greeting is extended. "*Eeh, Manolo, como tú almaneciste?*" He replies, "*Hola, Morena! Bien, gracias a Dios. Y tú?*" "*Bien, gracias.*" Morena returns to her kitchen where she is brewing coffee and watching the morning news on her small black and white television set. One hour later her three

children are up and eating their breakfast of *galleta del norte* (a small hard, dry biscuit/cracker) washed down with coffee. The youngest, Katarina, who is only six months old, is drinking her cold baby formula from a bottle and lying on one of the two beds found in the cramped bedroom. Fafe and Marilyn are in their blue school shirts and Morena tells Marilyn to get the brush so that she can prepare her hair before school. Already the sounds of the community are rising in volume. The ubiquitous 70 cc Honda motorcycles are contributing to the general din, as *motorconcho* taxi-drivers head for the *parquecito* to await possible fares. Merengues are being blasted from several of the local *colmados*, intermixed with the latest hits from Nueva York by Madonna and Michael Jackson coming out of two of the houses along Avenida Independencia. At seven-thirty the hotel *guagua* is racing through the town stopping briefly to pick up those *luperonenses* who are working on the day-shift at the Luperón Beach Resort. Another day is in full swing for the community of Luperón.

#### An Environmental Profile of the Terrestrial Resources in the *Municipio* of Luperón

Cultural ecology refers to the interplay between a human population and the environment. The investigation of the cultural ecology of a community can best be viewed as "the study of how human utilization of nature influences and is influenced by social organization and cultural values" (Bennett 1969: 10-11). This being true, the use of a specific type of technology "must be understood in terms of its cultural history and environmental setting" (Dahlberg 1986:17). Ideally, technologies employed by a human society should be adapted to the particular needs of the culture and local ecology. However, all too frequently nature is viewed as something to be manipulated, dominated, or molded to the needs of the human population seeking to utilize its resources. This



environmental modification results not only in profound ecological changes, but in cultural change as well.

To better understand the social organization presently extant in the *municipio* of Luperón, one must be cognizant that the majority of its inhabitants still rely on primary production activities for their livelihood and, as such, must live within the given environmental constraints of the region, or modify the local environment to suit their needs. In Luperón, the utilization of different environmental resources results in the use of a variety of technologies, production and consumption patterns, and distinct behavioral patterns. The natural environment, of which the *luperonenses* are intimately related, places severe constraints on the choices they make as they go about their daily lives. The following section is devoted to describing the natural environment in which the *luperonenses* live. This section focuses on the terrestrial resources found in the *municipio* of Luperón and their socio-economic functions in the daily lives of the inhabitants. A section of Chapter Five is devoted to a detailed description of the littoral and marine environments which play such an important role in the lives of the fishermen of Luperón.

Special emphasis is made in this section to identify the wild flora and terrestrial fauna most frequently utilized by the inhabitants. Included as well is information on the local climatic conditions and local soils. The central concern of this dissertation is to investigate whether the tourism industry, as implemented in the region of Luperón, can be considered a form of rural development as the rhetoric of the Dominican government planners imply. While much of the information presented in this investigation concerns the interaction between tourism and the fisher folk of Luperón, which was of central interest to me and studied more closely than other traditional economic activities due to the time limitations and funding, it is important to understand that in a community, where many of the inhabitants practice a form of occupational multiplicity, distinctions between fisherman/farmer, tourist employee/fisherman, or laborer/fisherman are never completely

delineated. For this reason a comprehensive understanding of community life provides useful insights into the impact of tourism and for this reason at least some data relating to other traditional industries besides fishing, such as agriculture and local commerce, are included.

The *municipio* of Luperón is located on the north coast of the Dominican Republic in the province of Puerto Plata. Luperón's northern border is defined by the Atlantic Ocean. Its southern territory faces the *municipio* of Imbert, while the lands of its southwestern corner border the *municipio* of Isabela. The *municipio* of Isabela was newly created in 1989, prior to this period it had been part of the *municipio* of Luperón. To the east, the borders of Luperón run adjacent to the *municipio* of Puerto Plata. The *municipio* of Luperón stretches approximately twenty-five kilometers from east to west.

Prior to 1989, Luperón had been much larger, but a substantial amount of its territory was lost when the *municipio* Isabela was created. Figures obtained from the municipal offices claimed that in 1988 there were 6000 individuals living in urban settings within the *municipio* (Luperón, El Estrecho, and La Sabana) and 29,000 living in rural areas. On Luperón's westernmost border can be found the village of La Isabela, also called El Castillo by the local inhabitants. The easternmost boundary of the *municipio* can be found several kilometers beyond the small village of Cambiaso on the coastal road to Maímon. Figure 3 shows the territory surrounding the community of Luperón, the coastline, and regional topography east of Luperón to the western fringe of the bay of Cambiaso. One can see that the local terrain is varied with hilly regions (*lomas*), salt marshes (*salados*), and arroyos dispersed throughout the territory.

As in any region, the different agricultural activities engaged in by *luperonenses* are largely determined by such environmental constraints as soil fertility, levels of precipitation, and amount of drainage found in the different types of terrain. Historically, the principal form of agricultural production for the small farmers in the region was a slash-and-burn type of horticulture. Cattle ranching was another important regional



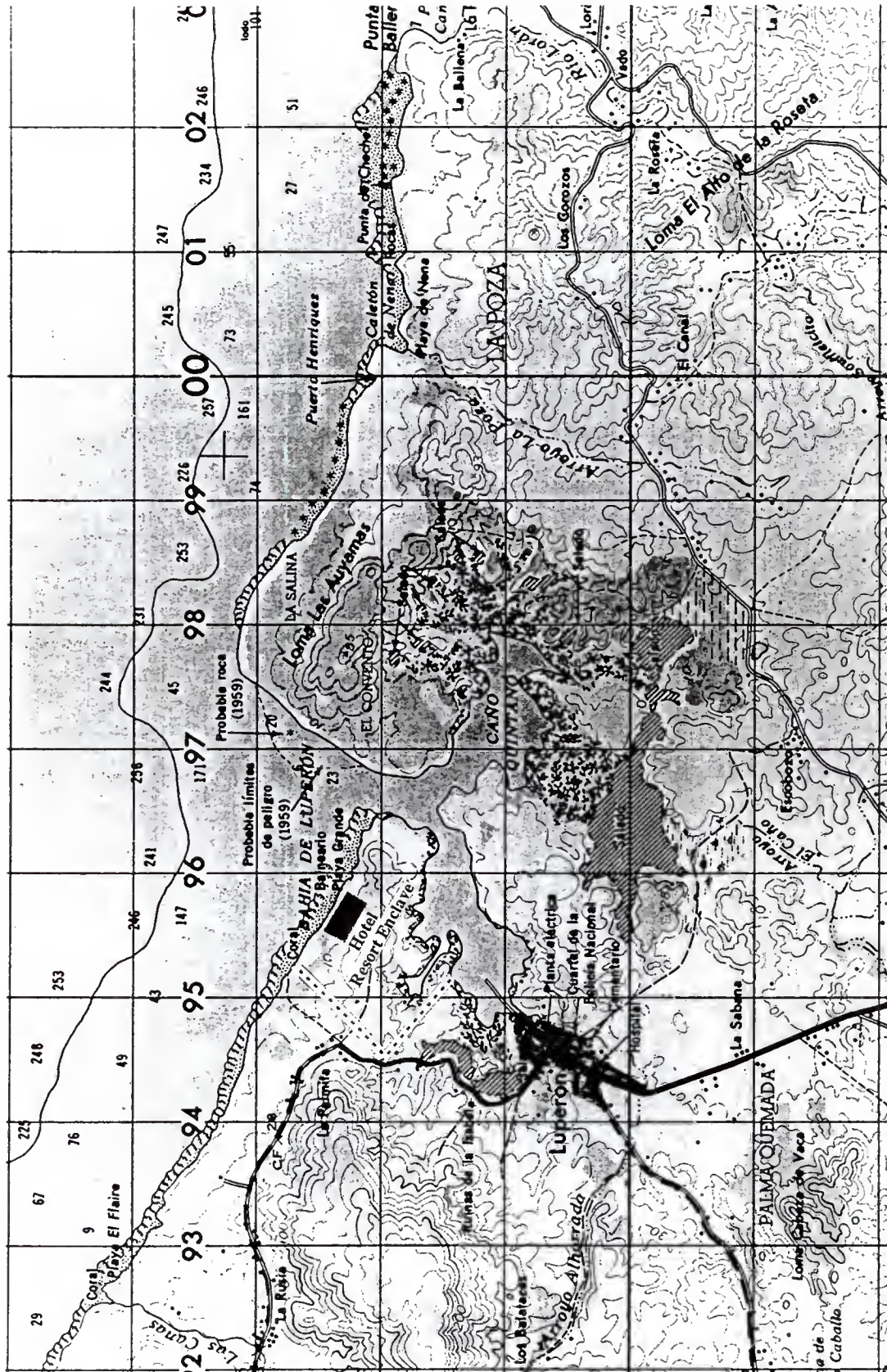


Figure 3: Partial Map of the Municipio of Luperón showing Town and Hotel. Modified from original. Each grid is equivalent to one square kilometer.

industry controlled, by and large, by the rich landowners in the region. In the past eighty years the large scale production of such monocrops as cotton, sugar-cane, maize, and sorghum have been introduced. The production of these crops relies heavily on mechanization, inorganic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, which few of the small farmers can afford to adopt. These crops, with their more capital-intensive agricultural methods, are cultivated mainly in the lowland regions of the *municipio*.

Today, the majority of inhabitants in Luperón are still involved in such economic activities as agriculture, ranching, or fishing. Like other agricultural regions linked to national markets studied by anthropologists (c.f. Bennett 1969), the town of Luperón is important as a central service center for those rural agricultural families who wish to avoid the journey to the more distant, larger, cities. The shops and administrative units supply the surrounding rural community with the hardware, food, and informational services they cannot obtain in the countryside. Another important function the centralized town plays to the surrounding agricultural community "lies not only in its schools, hospital, stores, and repair services, but also in its function of binding together" the surrounding dispersed population (Bennett 1969:79). It is to the town that the people come to celebrate the *fiesta* of the patron saint San Isidro. When rural inhabitants are asked who they are, they quickly identify themselves as *luperonenses*, whether or not they live in the town itself. In this manner the people of the *campo* (countryside) integrate themselves into the larger regional and national political system and markets. These rural inhabitants are identified as *luperonenses*, whose *municipio* is part of the province of Puerto Plata, which is part of the nation called the Dominican Republic, and as such they establish their identity.



### Climatic Conditions and Soils

All the lands of the *municipio* of Luperón are geographically classified as belonging to a subregion of the coastal Atlantic plain called the Bajabonico river valley and Luperón lowlands (Hungría Morel 1974:11). The Atlantic coastal plain lying between the Cordillera Septentrional and the Atlantic Ocean in the north of the Dominican Republic is a relatively fertile region. Its potential for agricultural production is not as high as that of the Cibao, located just on the other side of the Cordillera Septentrional, whose lands are the richest in the country, but productivity is high and a wide variety of crops and livestock are raised in the region. The annual temperatures of the region exhibit little variation. January is the coldest month with a mean of 23.5 degrees Celsius and August is the hottest month with a mean temperature of 27.5 degrees Celsius. This warm climate would be ideal for agricultural production throughout the year, but other natural conditions prohibit most farmers from sowing more than one or two crops annually. The most important environmental constraints which hinder agricultural production in the region are soil quality and water availability.

The large percentage of the soil in Luperón can be best characterized as a type of calcareous clay, black in color, and providing poor drainage (OAS 1967b:14). Much of the *municipio's* terrain is characterized by its hilly topography. Due to population pressure on available lands, even slopes with steep inclines are utilized for slash-and-burn agriculture. When the heavy winter rains come they wash much of the richest topsoil away because of the lack of protecting foliage. The signs of erosion can be seen on many of the hillsides, but the soils of the *monte*, as the hilly terrain is called, are considered to be some of the most productive agricultural soils available. Today, farmers are utilizing these slopes more intensively. All the local farmers agree that the best soils in the *municipio* are found in the bottom lands adjacent to the Bajabonico river. Here, the rich soils and reliable water supply provide the farmers with good crop yields and on

those lands which are irrigated more than one crop can be grown per year. Elsewhere in the *municipio*, soils are of poorer quality and crops must rely on the winter rains to bring adequate water for their development. Generally, the dry lowlands of the *municipio*, or the *sabana* as these lands are referred to, are used for grazing. However, some of the *sabana* land is also sown with maize, sugar-cane, cotton, tobacco, or sorghum.

For many farmers in Luperón rain is the only source of water for their crops. The agricultural cycle in the region centers around the arrival of the rainy season. Rainfall on the north coast of the Dominican Republic decreases as one goes from east to west. While average annual rainfall for Nagua in the east is 2,373 mm, in Puerto Plata it is only 1,788 mm, in Luperón only 1,320 mm, and by the time one reaches the westernmost port city of Monte Cristi it is an arid 644 mm per year (OAS 1967b:9). The winds typically blow out of the northeast, and clouds lose most of their moisture in the eastern regions of the north coast, leaving little in reserve for when they arrive in the western parts. Unlike the southern part of the Dominican Republic, the peak period of rainfall on the north coast comes during the winter months. The vast majority of the precipitation Luperón receives falls as rain between the months of November and March. December is the peak month for precipitation with an average of 280 mm. of rain (OAS 1967a:375).

The ecology of Luperón is classified as belonging within the category described as subtropical moist forest (OAS 1967a:373). This can be misleading since rainfall is highly variable within different sections of the *municipio*, with the eastern part receiving substantially more precipitation than the west. According to local inhabitants, dry spells are becoming more frequent and longer in duration in recent years. This is attributed to, in the opinion of many local inhabitants, the increased deforestation throughout the region. These views were expressed to this researcher in conversations during a visit in 1992, after the longest drought in recent history had just ended. It was obvious in these conversations that the duration of the drought, lasting nine months from March to

November 1991, had made the agriculturalists of Luperón much more concerned about the health of their local environment than they had been in the past.

### The Flora of Luperón

There are a wide variety of flora found within the *municipio* of Luperón and many of these species are utilized by the local inhabitants. The *municipio* had been heavily deforested during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and there is no primeval forest to be found anywhere within its boundaries. Even secondary growth is sparse, but there are still a few areas that have dense stands of trees. Several of the hilltops have a complete canopy of trees, but the majority of the trees in the *municipio* are found in dispersed clumps between fields, along arroyos and rivers, or anywhere where the land is too poor for agriculture.

Deforestation is not a problem unique to Luperón. It is a national problem and a host of legislative acts have been passed to protect the national forests and slow the rate of deforestation. The Dominican Republic was formerly a wood exporting nation, but in 1967, a presidential decree announced the closing of all private lumber mills, and a ban on harvesting live trees was enforced. The nation has since become a net importer of wood products (Hartshorn *et al.* 1982:23). However, the need for charcoal and a source of inexpensive building materials has resulted in many individuals ignoring the law. Evidence of continued illegal harvesting of trees can still be seen.

There are a wide variety of different tree species represented within the frontiers of Luperón. Though their aggregate numbers are low, many of these trees are important to the inhabitants for what they provide besides wood and charcoal. A variety of these species provide feed for animals, medicines, fruits, and resins which are used to make glues and caulking. Important tree species found growing wild in the *municipio* whose products are utilized by *luperonenses* include: mahogany or *caobo* (*Swietenia mahoganii*);

*candelón* (*Colubrina ferruginosa*); *baitoa* (*Phyllostylon brasiliense*); *palo amargo* (*Ceanotus americanus*); *guaconejo* (*Amyris silvatica*); oaks or *robles*; logwood or *campeche* (*Haematoxylon campechianum*); almond or *almendra*; cashew (*Anacardium occidentale*); mango (*Mangifera domestica*); acacia or *tumba viento*; coconut (*Cocos nucifera*); on a few of the highest hilltops can be found pines (*Pinus occidentalis*); and on the coast are found joint firs or *uva de mar* (*Coccoloba uvifera*) and manchineel, also called the star apple, or *caimito* (*Hippomane mancinella*). Found reaching out into the tidal zone in protected coves, lagoons, and on the shores of the Bahía de Gracias are dense stands of black mangrove or *mangle prieto* (*Avicennia*).

Mentioned previously was the fact that the cutting of trees without the express permission of FORESTA (Dirección General Forestal) is prohibited by national law. This permission is difficult to obtain and local detachments of the *guardia* (army) patrol the rural areas of the *municipio* as part of their regular duties searching for signs of illegal harvesting of trees. Those individuals who are apprehended illegally harvesting live trees pay either a heavy fine or receive a jail sentence. It is immaterial if the tree is on your own property or not, only dead wood may be cut down without prior approval.

Palm trees are exempt from this law. They are found in abundance in the region. Their leaves and trunks provide important building materials for the local population. There are three common types of palm found in the region: the royal palm, sometimes called the *palma real* or *palma de yagua* (*Roystonea regia*); a variety of the fan palm called *palma de cana* (*Sabal umbraculifera*); and, another species of fan palm called *yarey* (*Copernicia berteroana*).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> There is some discrepancy in the correct taxonomic names used for these varieties of palm trees. In the Simon and Schuster's International Spanish/English Dictionary published in 1973, the *palma de cana* is listed as having the botanical classification *Sabal parviflora* and *yarey* is listed as *Coccothrinax argentea*. This is different from the classifications I found listed in Gustavo A. Antonini's Processes and Patterns of Landscape Change in the Linea Noroeste, Dominican Republic, 1968. I have chosen to use the taxonomic names listed by Antonini because this source focused specifically on those species found in the Dominican northern regions and, as such, I believe it to be more accurate.



Of these three types of palm, the royal palm and the *palma de cana* are used intensively. The hard outer fibrous "bark" of all three types of palm are cut into thin boards, 6–10 cm. in width, and used as siding for buildings. The green section of the upper trunk of the royal palm, when it dries, sheds a brown section of "bark" which is called *yagua*. This *yagua* provides a relatively inexpensive building material used by many of the poorer *luperonenses* to construct the walls of their houses. Traditionally, these pieces of *yagua* were sewn together using a twine also made from palm trees, but today it is more common to see them attached by small gauge metal wire.

The palm nuts from the royal palm are collected and fed to the pigs. Highly nutritious, according to the local farmers, this is a cheap feed for the small farmers' pig sties (*pocilgas*). The palm fronds from the *palma de cana* are cut and dried to be used as roofing material. Woven tightly together, these palm fronds provide an inexpensive type of thatch roof which can last up to twenty-five years before it needs replacing.<sup>2</sup>

Both the royal palm and the *palma de cana* are considered important tree crops. Large landowners often sell the right to harvest these trees to individuals who then do all the cutting, drying, and marketing of the *yagua* or *cana*. They pay the landowner his or her share from the profits of this enterprise, the acceptable rate being a fifty-fifty split between the landowner and seller. Another important item the royal palm provides is decoration for important occasions. No wedding is complete without an archway woven from the fronds of the royal palm. Celebrating a *quince* (a coming-out party for young women held on their fifteen birthdays), or any other important occasion, is usually held

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<sup>2</sup> The duration of a roof made from *cana* depends on many factors. The amount of precipitation in a region is one important factor. Also, rats are fond of nesting in these roofs. If a household has a cat, it is not uncommon to see it hunting through the fronds of *cana* helping to rid the roof of a major cause of leaks and deterioration. Fire is also a common cause of roof destruction. During 1989, two houses lost their roofs to fires caused by kitchen sparks which ignited the dry *cana*. Typically, a *cana* roof which lasts more than twelve years with little leakage is considered to have been well-made by *Luperonenses*.

in a location decorated by woven fronds of the royal palm. Finally, a minor activity, which is dying out in the community of Luperón, is the ability to weave hats from palm fronds. A few of the older women still retain this skill, but few young people are continuing the practice. In 1989, one old woman made these woven palm hats which she then sold to tourists.

Fruit trees have an important place in local agriculture. One of the most important fruit trees, as an agricultural commodity for export, are lime trees. Limes from Luperón can be found in the central market of Santiago and even as far away as Santo Domingo. In late February and early March, when the limes are harvested, many large cargo trucks heavily laden with hundred pound bags of limes can be seen traveling the main roads of the *municipio*. Other important fruit trees which provide inhabitants with both food and income include the mango, tamarind, guava, plantain, banana, bitter orange, sweet orange, mandarin, grapefruit, *limoncillo* ( a large tree which bears a small green fruit whose insides contain a sweet yellow-orange pulp surrounding a hard nut), almond, custard apple or *guanábana*, breadfruit or *guánpan*, and the avocado. The calabash tree provides local inhabitants with containers, musical instruments, and medicine.

It should be noted here that many of the fruit trees and plants being grown by the inhabitants of Luperón today differ little from those cultivated by the Tainos. Crosby lists maize, varieties of beans, peanut, potato, sweet potato, manioc, squashes, pumpkin, papaya, guava, avocado, pineapple, tomato, chile pepper (*Capsicum annuum* and other types of peppers), and cocoa, as some of the most valuable Amerindian dietary contributions to the Old World (1972:170). Many of these were first introduced to Europe from the island of Hispaniola. Maize, manioc (sweet and bitter), peanut, sweet potato, pineapple, guava, avocado, papaya, and peppers were cultivated by the Tainos (Vega 1981:26-27). It is worth mentioning that many of these Taino agricultural legacies are still referred to by their Taino names. However, for some unknown reason papaya is not. In every other part of the Spanish speaking New World this fruit is referred to by its

aboriginal Taino name "papaya," but in the Dominican Republic it is called *lechosa*. Why many of the Taino names for fruits, vegetables, and tubers continue to be employed by Dominicans today, while the original Taino name for *lechosa*, is not, is a mystery yet to be unraveled.

Shrubs and cactus are also utilized by *luperonenses*. Many shrubs serve medicinal purposes. The aloe plant, or *sábila*, is used for cuts and burns, to make a drink for combating colds, as a laxative, and is hung from the ceiling of houses to help ward off evil spirits and unhappiness. The annatto shrub (*Bixa orellana*) provides rich red seeds important for making a dye used to color cheese, for seasoning foods, and for making a sauce similar in appearance to tomato sauce which many people consider full of vitamins and beneficial for one's health. *Tuna de España*, a type of prickly pear, is used medicinally to alleviate headaches. This cactus is rubbed on the forehead and temples, "cooling" the area affected. Also, it is used in the same manner to ease symptoms associated with menopause. The *maya de raqueta* is a cactus whose juices are used to heal cuts and saddle sores on donkeys, horses, and cattle. The castor-oil plant, called *querva* in Spanish, is a shrub found growing wild throughout the municipio. The beans are collected and pressed, then the yellow oil obtained is used to combat stomach ailments.

*Maya de palizadas*, sometimes referred to as *maya haitiana*, is a type of succulent cactus which is used extensively to form impenetrable fences able to deter the most persistent cow or donkey. The thick, milky-white sap from this cactus is caustic. Those individuals who trim these cactus fences take great care to avoid getting the sap in their eyes, or in any open wounds they may have. This sap is so caustic that many poorer families use it to brand their donkeys and horses. A wound is scratched in the flank of the animal in the desired shape and then the sap is applied. Scar tissue will form in the shape of the desired "brand."

Every family with a small *parcela* (a few *tareas* of land) will plant a few vegetables or a few fruit trees.<sup>3</sup> A family plot is typically referred to as a *conuco*. This is an indigenous word adopted from the Taino people, who were Arawakan speakers, and practiced a raised mound horticulture from which the word originated. A wide variety of vegetables and *viveres* (denotes food staples such as plantains, bananas, or *yuca*-sweet manioc) are grown in these small plots. Kidney beans, pigeon peas, tomatoes, eggplant, sweet potato, carrots, onions, garlic, bell peppers, cabbage, red beets, cucumbers, pineapples, various squashes, broad beans (*haba*), yams (*ñame*), *yautia* (another type of root crop similar to a yam), peanuts, pumpkins, and several types of herbs, are all favorite garden crops. Cash crops and marketing patterns will be discussed in more detail in later in this chapter in the section titled "Economic Conditions in the Community."

### Terrestrial Fauna of Luperón

Earlier in this chapter it was shown that the flora of Luperón is used extensively in local culture. The terrestrial wild fauna of the region is not exploited as heavily. This is due to the fact that many animal species are becoming increasingly difficult to find. There were no large terrestrial animals indigenous to Hispaniola to begin with. The small hutia, iguanas, crabs, and various birds were hunted by the Tainos (Vega 1981:31). Hutias and iguanas were often prepared by a method of smoking called "*bucán*." The meat was dried by smoking it over a slow burning fire on a grill called a "*barbacoa*" by the Tainos (Vega 1981:31). These words have found their way into both the English and Spanish languages. However, their meanings have altered over the years and have come to refer to buccaneers or *bucaneros* (originally referring to non-Spanish interlopers living

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<sup>3</sup> A *tarea* is the local standard of land measurement. A *tarea* is equivalent to 629 sq. meters. There are 15.89 *tareas* in one hectare or 6.43 *tareas* in one acre. My informants told me that a *tarea* traditionally referred to the area one man could hoe in a day.



in the western part of Hispaniola during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who hunted wild cattle for their hides, only later did it become synonymous with pirate), and as barbecue.

Exotic species, introduced into Hispaniola since the contact period, are the main focus of local hunting. Doves, pigeons, and wild guinea hens are favorite targets for *luperonenses*. Other birds are frequently shot, especially around the time when the maize is ripening, but these are rarely eaten. Egrets are found throughout the *municipio*, especially in association with cattle, and are viewed as beneficial animals by local ranchers. Each evening they return to the mangrove trees lining the Bahía de Gracias to roost by the thousands. In the past, people would harvest the eggs from the egret nests to eat. Today, some people still seek out the eggs under the cover of darkness. Harvesting these eggs is prohibited, but at night the local marines do not patrol the bay and some individuals take advantage of this illegal resource.

Snakes are viewed as dangerous by many *luperonenses* and destroyed whenever possible. Even though there are no venomous snakes on Hispaniola, people look upon snakes as threats to their domesticated fowl. "They eat eggs and kill chicks," was a common response to my questioning why snakes were hunted and killed when found. Boas, the largest of the local snakes, are usually killed outright, but occasionally they are sold as pets to Dominicans living in cities. The fact that these snakes also consume mice and rats, whose numbers can rapidly destroy ripening crops, is largely overlooked by many local farmers.

The wild bees in the *municipio* provide an important service to the local farmers by pollinating their crops. In addition to this critical function, they are a source of honey, and a few individuals specialize in collecting this wild resource. The cliffs along the coast between the town of Luperón and the village of El Castillo are favorite locations for honey collecting. Individuals scale the cliffs and smoke the nests in order to calm the bees while they gather their honey. Dangling twenty meters above jagged rocks and

being stung by angry bees is a steep price these honey gatherers pay, but this honey commands a fair price on the open market. Wild honey is preferred by many *luperonenses* over the more expensive store bought type.

A final wild terrestrial resource which is avidly sought after is the land crab (*Cardisoma guanhumi*). Favorite haunts for land crabs are caves, mangroves, sugar-cane fields, and rice paddies (Bonnelly de Calventi 1975:13). Land crabs are harvested for both subsistence and commercial purposes. They are a favorite Dominican food and it is a common sight while driving down a road to see vendors, with ten or twenty crabs strung on a string, hailing passers-by. There are no rice paddies in Luperón, but land crabs are collected in sugar-cane fields and on the hillsides. Land crabs are available throughout the year, but they are most abundant during the rainy season from November to February. In Luperón, on an evening when there is rain accompanied by thunder and lightning, people say that is the best time to hunt crabs. With a gloved hand, or using a *gancho* (a long stick with a wire hook at its ends used to pull crabs out of their holes), these crabs are caught for home consumption and for commercial purposes.

One impact of this heavy demand for land crabs is that their numbers are beginning to decline. Several informants told me that when they were young, during the 1930s and 1940s, land crabs were so plentiful throughout the *municipio* of Luperón that they were a major nuisance. During the rainy season when they were actively seeking out mates, they would enter peoples' domiciles at night keeping them awake, and be so numerous as to make it dangerous to walk to the latrine for fear of being badly pinched on the toes and feet. Also, many would be crushed by animals or vehicles, and the smell of these crabs rotting would leave a nasty stench over the community for weeks at a time. As recently as ten years ago, people could go out at night and capture one hundred crabs in the course of an evening. Today, people consider themselves fortunate to capture more than a few dozen. This scarcity is reflected in their rising market price. Laws forbidding the harvest of gravid females exist, but such a regulation is difficult to enforce, and with a

high market price these crabs are likely to be exploited until their declining numbers make it unprofitable to continue.

This is the environment where the *luperonenses* work in order to provide enough to support themselves and their families. To the tourists who visit this region it appears to be a rich land full of tropical splendor, but the "Golden Horde" mainly come to visit and bask in the sun, returning to their air conditioned rooms when the heat becomes too oppressive. For most of them drought means little more than additional time on the beach and moonlight walks on the beach. Hunger means skipping lunch to avoid gaining weight. They are on holiday from the realities found in their societies. The *luperonenses* see members of the "Golden Horde" come and go. A lucky few benefit from this invasion of pleasure seekers, the majority must continue to make their way in an increasingly marginal environment where drought spells hunger for a household or no money for necessities such as medicine or new tools. This is the side of life in Luperón few tourists notice and even fewer seek to understand.

### The Shape of the Town

As one approaches the town of Luperón on the road from Imbert in one of the *guaguas* which are the sole form of public transportation from Imbert to Luperón, one can feel that the vehicle is descending down to the coastal plain. A little past the village of El Estrecho the road swings right and then left in two sweeping curves as the road sharply descends down to the flat lands surrounding the village of La Sabana. Dotting the sides of the road are tiny *bohíos*, one or two room houses constructed of traditional materials from the palm trees, wooden houses topped with roofs of zinc, and modern concrete block homes several stories high. A few are set back from the road, but the majority are located no more than a few meters from the edge of the asphalt. At this point the driver of the vehicle starts veering left and right on the road to avoid the many holes

which are periodically filled by town workers only to reappear after a few months. Only the worst stretches will cause the driver to slow down and the passengers wedged together four to a seat in the confines of the *guagua* shift left and right cushioning each other with their bodies.

The first indication that you are entering Luperón comes when you pass a building on the right of the road advertising Angy's Disco/Car wash. Passing over a small bridge the vehicle passes out of the harsh sunlight into the relative cool of the shade of hardwood trees lining the side of the road. To the right is a covered, circular building set back from the road. This is the community's *gallera*, or cock-fighting ring. In 1989, next to the *gallera* was a construction site where workers were in the process of building a large discotheque. On the left side of the road, across from the *gallera*, was a small business calling itself a *cafetería*. One would find it difficult to get anything to eat there. All this business sold was rum, beer, tobacco, and sex. It was a "cabaret" and the closest thing the town of Luperón had to a house of prostitution. Next to this building was a modern block house whose owner was renting the property to a U.S. citizen working in the local tourist business. At this point the road has a name—Avenida Duarte.

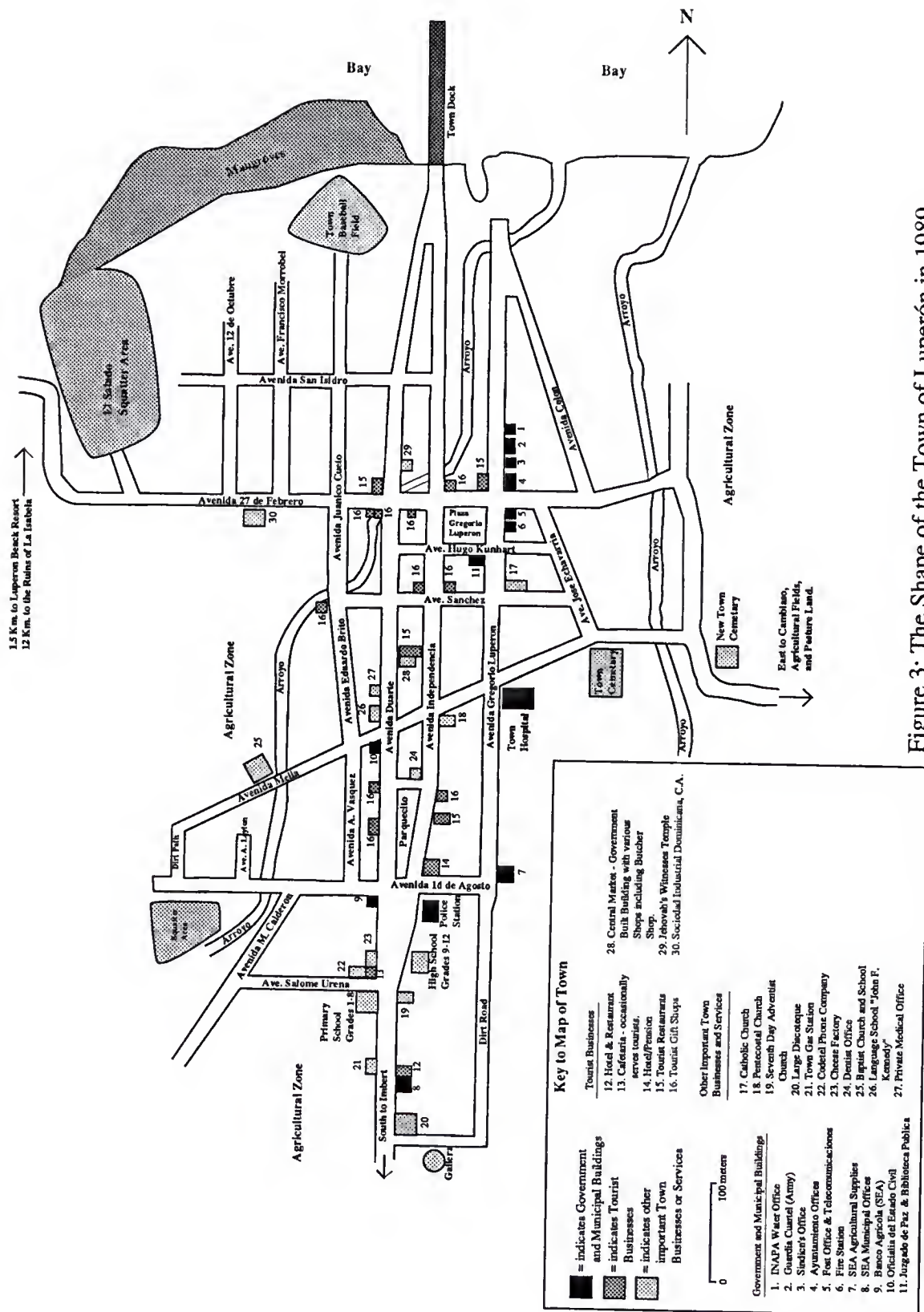
The town of Luperón is the political, educational, medical, and religious center of the *municipio*. It is the fact that these activities are available here which makes it different from the hamlets and small villages which dot the *municipio*. The town is a place of both tradition and modernity, where the traditional rural Dominican life is juxtaposed with the modern ways of the Dominican cities, and more recently, with the worldly experiences of the international tourist. The main artery of town is Avenida Duarte. Avenida Duarte is an extension of the road from Imbert and bisects the town, ending at the harbor dock on the north side of Luperón. Like most Latin American towns, Luperón's central plaza, Plaza General Gregorio Luperón, is in the center of old Luperón. Here there is a small bust of the General Luperón and a small stone bandstand located in the middle of the plaza. All but deserted during the day, the plaza comes alive in the evenings, especially



on Sundays. Stone benches surround the plaza and it is here where the town's young people come to promenade and flirt with each other most evenings when it does not rain and where the town band comes Sunday evenings to give their weekly concerts which always end with a hearty, if not melodic, rendition of the Dominican national anthem.

Avenida Independencia and Avenida Gregorio Luperón flank the plaza to the west and east, while Avenida 27 de Febrero and Avenida Hugo Kunhart run parallel of the Plaza on the north and south sides respectively. Figure No. 4 shows that the town has since grown outward over the years to the south and west, but the main plaza is still the heart of the town. The principal government offices are found around the plaza. The *ayuntamiento*, with the office of the *síndico* and municipal administrative offices, is located at the northeast corner of Avenida Luperón and 27 de Febrero. To the right of the *ayuntamiento* can be found the *Guardia Cuartel* (military barracks) and the INAPA building (Instituto Nacional de Aguas Potables y Alcantarillados - the state-run water company) where residents go to pay their water bills.

Facing the plaza to the east are the post office, the telecommunications office with its single public phone, and the *Cuartel de Bomberos Municipales* (fire station). The fire station formerly housed the police station, but in August of 1989 the police moved to more spacious quarters next to Luperón's high school which had formerly been the local hospital until a new hospital was built in the early 1980s. The relocation of the police station sparked a day of protest among the high school student body who viewed the presence of the police next to the school as an attempt to intimidate opposition to the existing political structure of Dominican society. Placards were made and the students, in an almost holiday atmosphere, marched through the town shouting their opposition to the move. The next day the police moved in and the students went to school as if nothing had happened. In 1989, the plot next to the fire station was standing vacant, a place where donkeys browsed and chickens searched for morsels in the dirt, but in 1992 this vacant lot had been transformed into a movie cinema in its final stages of construction.



On the south side the plaza is flanked by the Juzgado de Paz (town courthouse) which also houses the town library. The largest store in town is situated next to the courthouse. Selling both dry goods, clothes, and food items, there is constant traffic in and out of this business throughout the day except for between twelve and two o'clock when businesses close for the traditional *siesta*. The west side of the plaza houses a small wood house with a zinc roof whose owners live elsewhere and the prominent residence of Don Gregorio, who owns the large store next to the courthouse. The north side of the plaza was flanked in 1989 by several old wooden and zinc buildings housing a photographer's studio and sweet shop and the modern restaurant/discotheque "Annie," whose owner specialized in attracting tourists to dine on the first floor and local youth to dance on the second floor. In 1992, the small photographer's shop had disappeared and a modern two story building was being constructed with a shop on the first floor and two private apartments on second floor. The old yellow house on the northwest corner of the plaza, formerly a private residence in 1989, had been transformed into tourist gift shop in 1992.

Off the central plaza, the town of Luperón has few distinct neighborhoods. Representing the fact that Luperón is small, poor town, and its growth is not yet guided by urban planners, housing is organized in a "helter-skelter" fashion. Affluent *luperonenses* residing in modern concrete block houses may be flanked by smaller houses built of *tabla* (palm boards) with zinc or palm thatch roofs. There is no business district or residential district, with homes and businesses mixed together with little differentiation in architecture. Table 2 lists each street and the number of businesses and homes found on each particular street. Reviewing the information in Table 2, one can see that while the streets of Duarte, 27 de Febrero, and Independencia are where most businesses are located, only four streets or *barrios* have no businesses established on them. In general, there is a definite preference among *luperonenses* to live near to, or in the same building as, their businesses; they feel this offers better protection for their investments from the ever present fear of being robbed by robbers (*tigres*).

Table 2: Number of Businesses, Government Offices, and Houses in Luperón by Street in 1989.

| <u>Street Name</u>                        | <u>Houses</u> | <u>National Gov't<br/>&amp; Municipal<br/>Offices</u> | <u>Businesses</u> |
|---|---------------|---|-------------------|
| 12 de Octubre                             | 44            | ----  | 3                 |
| San Isidro                                | 34            | ----  | 8                 |
| Francisco Morrobel                        | 55            | ----  | 8                 |
| Juanico Cueto                             | 55            | ----  | 7                 |
| Aquilina Vasquez                          | 30            | ----  | 7                 |
| Eduardo Brito                             | 13            | ----  | 1                 |
| Manuel Calderón                           | 28            | ----  | 4                 |
| Salome Ureña                              | 2             | 1   | 2                 |
| Mella                                     | 44            | 1   | 5                 |
| 16 de Agosto                              | 72            | ----  | 4                 |
| Alfonso Leyton                            | 7             | ----  | ----              |
| Duarte                                    | 77            | 7   | 55                |
| Independencia                             | 39            | ----  | 12                |
| Gregorio Luperón                          | 63            | 7   | 3                 |
| 27 de Febrero                             | 40            | 1   | 25                |
| Sanchez                                   | 4             | ----  | 1                 |
| Hugo Kunhart                              | 3             | 1   | 2                 |
| M. Echavarría                             | 3             | ----  | ----              |
| Colón                                     | 16            | ----  | ----              |
| Barrios:<br>El Salado                     | 23            | ----  | 1                 |
| Agosto Barrio<br>(behind 16 de<br>Agosto) | 11            | ----  | ----              |
| Totals:                                   | 663           | 18  | 148               |



There are residential areas of Luperón where the more affluent families prefer to reside. The older streets near the central plaza are lined by the homes of the wealthier *luperonense* families. On the streets of Independencia, Hugo Kunhart, Gregorio Luperón, Sánchez, M. Echavarría, and the eastern part of Mella avenue are where the majority of the most fashionable homes can be found. The street of Colon, located to the east of Gregorio Luperón, is also lined with concrete houses, but these are smaller homes, reflecting the middle-class character of their owners. There are other large modern homes found throughout the town and these are the homes of nouveau "rich" in Luperón. Those individuals who had succeeded in making enough money through hard work in the Dominican Republic or abroad, often build homes in the neighborhoods where they were raised so that they can be close to their family. Thus, one can find homes in various stages of construction in all parts of the town.

Housing is an excellent indicator of economic status in Luperón. Upward mobility means house improvements. With neolocal residence patterns being the accepted norm, poor young couples just starting out will opt to live in houses of the simplest traditional construction materials rather than wait years in order to accrue sufficient funds to build or buy a more substantial dwelling. Houses range from one room, dirt floor, *yagua* walls, *cana* thatch roof, homes with or without a latrine, to modern two or three story concrete block houses with indoor plumbing, glass windows, garage, telephone, and iron gates surrounding the property. There is a natural pattern to improving one's house in the town. In the poorest households floors are packed earth, cement floors can be found at the next economic level, and cement floors covered with ornate tiles are found in the wealthiest homes. Walls are typically constructed of *yagua* in the poorest homes (however, sometimes pieces of zinc, wood, plastic, and even cardboard, are used to fill gaps in the walls), *tabla* palm boards are used in the homes of those a little wealthier, and concrete block walls are found to be the favored construction material for the wealthiest households. Some of the oldest homes in the town have walls made of real hardwood

planks; however, these houses date prior to the mid-1960s when logging was declared illegal in the Dominican Republic. Roofs also can be "typed" within certain socio-economic levels ranging from those of *cana* or palm thatch which are found among the poor residents of Luperón, to zinc roofs nailed down to a supporting structure of wooden poles (often cut down and sold illegally) found covering the houses of those more economically stable, to poured concrete slabs covering the homes of Luperón's most affluent residents.

Building materials are expensive in Luperón. One donkey load of yagua bark which is 24 pieces of yagua, referred to as *un caballo de yagua*, cost U.S. \$6.37 in 1989. A similar load of *cana* palm thatch, also 24 pieces, cost U.S. \$4.78. A small roof would require at least four loads of *cana* thatch. Zinc roofing, which is sold by the sheet (32 inches wide by 72 inches long), cost U.S. \$5.41 per sheet. One concrete block cost U.S. \$0.38 and a 100 lb. bag of cement cost U.S. \$4.78. Also required for the construction of a cement house, 3/8 inch diameter metal rebar (*barilla*), 20 feet long, was sold in lots of thirteen, at U.S. \$26.10. One truck load of sand and gravel, required to include with the cement mix, cost U.S. \$23.88 in 1989.

Table 3 is a brief synopsis of the building materials used, and amenities available, in the houses of Luperón. The housing census was conducted between September 22 and September 29, 1989. There were 732 houses recorded within the immediate confines of the town's main street network; however, only 663 of these houses were occupied at the time the census was taken, the others being houses owned by people presently residing elsewhere, vacation homes of wealthy Dominicans living in Santiago de los Caballeros and Santo Domingo, or abandoned structures falling into disrepair. From the data obtained in the housing census, 63 heads of households were selected to be interviewed in a structured interview format. The information obtained in these interviews concerning building materials used in the construction of each house and the amenities available in each house are included in Table 3.

Table 3: House Construction in the Town of Luperón and Survey Sample.

| <u>Construction Material<br/>or Amenity</u> | <u>N</u>   | <u>% of total</u> | <u>Sample N</u> | <u>% of Sample</u> |
|---|------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| <u>Floor Type</u>                           |            |                   |                 |                    |
| Packed Dirt                                 | 100        | 15.0              | 9               | 15.52              |
| Wood  | 9          | 1.0               | 1               | 1.72               |
| Poured Cement                               | <u>554</u> | <u>84.0</u>       | <u>48</u>       | <u>82.76</u>       |
| Total =                                     | 663        | 100.0             | 58              | 100.00             |
| <u>Wall Type</u>                            |            |                   |                 |                    |
| Yagua                                       | 126        | 19.0              | 11              | 18.97              |
| Tabla/Wood                                  | 417        | 63.0              | 35              | 60.34              |
| Cement block                                | <u>120</u> | <u>18.0</u>       | <u>12</u>       | <u>20.69</u>       |
| Total =                                     | 663        | 100.0             | 58              | 100.00             |
| <u>Roof Type</u>                            |            |                   |                 |                    |
| Cana thatch                                 | 363        | 55.0              | 30              | 51.72              |
| Zinc sheets                                 | 266        | 40.0              | 24              | 41.38              |
| Poured cement                               | <u>34</u>  | <u>4.0</u>        | <u>4</u>        | <u>6.90</u>        |
| Total =                                     | 663        | 100.0             | 58              | 100.00             |
| <u>Sanitation Facilities</u>                |            |                   |                 |                    |
| No facilities                               | 4          | 0.6               | ----            | 00.00              |
| Latrine                                     | 472        | 71.2              | 45              | 77.59              |
| Outside flush toilet                        | 106        | 16.0              | 8               | 13.79              |
| Inside flush toilet                         | <u>81</u>  | <u>12.2</u>       | <u>5</u>        | <u>8.62</u>        |
| Total =                                     | 663        | 100.0             | 58              | 100.00             |
| <u>Houses with Electricity</u>              |            |                   |                 |                    |
| With electricity                            | 579        | 87.0              | 50              | 86.21              |
| Without electricity                         | <u>84</u>  | <u>13.0</u>       | <u>8</u>        | <u>13.79</u>       |
| Total =                                     | 663        | 100.0             | 58              | 100.00             |
| <u>Houses with Television*</u>              |            |                   |                 |                    |
| With television sets                        | 321        | 48.0              | 28              | 48.28              |
| Without television sets                     | <u>342</u> | <u>52.0</u>       | <u>30</u>       | <u>51.72</u>       |
| Total =                                     | 663        | 100.0             | 58              | 100.00             |
| <u>Private Telephones**</u>                 |            |                   |                 |                    |
| Homes w/phones                              | 110        | 16.6              | 20              | 34.48              |
| Homes w/o phones                            | <u>553</u> | <u>83.4</u>       | <u>38</u>       | <u>65.52</u>       |
| Total =                                     | 663        | 100.0             | 58              | 100.00             |

\* These totals only reflect the number of houses with television antenna on their roofs and not the actual number of televisions present in the houses.

\*\* Private telephones became available to *luperonense* households in August 1989. Installation continued when I was interviewing households and this is reflected in the higher percentage of my sample having telephones.

Generally, the outskirts of town are where the poorest *luperonenses* can be found living. The area called *El Salado*, a flat region off of 27 de Febrero on the west of town, is home to some of the poorest households. Flanked on one side by mangrove trees and the bay, peak high tides often bring water to cover the flats and heavy rains make the region a muddy mess and a breeding ground for mosquitoes, but houses are constantly being built further and further out onto the flats, reflecting the growing need for housing in the community. In the southwestern corner of the town, off the streets of Manuel Calderón and 16 de Agosto is a small cluster of dirt floored, one and two room, houses with *yagua* walls and *cana* roofs which I call the Agosto *barrio*. To the west of 12 de Octubre is a similar cluster of poor households. At the northern ends of the streets 12 de Octubre, Francisco Morrobel, Duarte, and Gregorio Luperón (see Figure 3), located near the edge of the mangrove trees lining the bay of Luperón, are similar clusters of simple *bohíos* (simple huts made of traditional materials). Most of these houses have already been wired for electricity, even if it is only a single bulb hanging from the ceiling, and improvements are under way as the owner can afford them.

Nevertheless, vast differences in housing construction exemplify the wide gap between the rich and poor which exists in Luperón. Many aspire to eventually own a solid concrete block home with indoor plumbing, but in 1989 only five percent of the houses were completely constructed of concrete and only twelve percent of homes had indoor plumbing. Over 70 percent of the population still relied on household latrines for human waste disposal and 13 percent of the inhabited houses still had no electrical power. It is interesting to note that almost 50 percent of all households had televisions, at one time or another, in their homes. Because the location of the town is in a bowl surrounded by hills, antenna are required to get any of the national T.V. stations, and it was possible to count these in the housing census. However, one of the first things pawned when money is scarce is the family television and the three pawn shops in the community are full of *luperonense* televisions.



One question each of 58 residences in the household survey was asked was whether the any of the occupants had a television. Twenty-eight of the households gave a positive response to this question (48 percent); however, during the course of interviewing each household notes were made concerning whether or not certain material items were physically present and in only 19 of these households (33 percent) were television actually observed. Since most interviews were conducted in the living room of each resident, the same place where the television is usually displayed, it is likely that in at least some of the nine households where they said they had a television, but where it could not be seen, that it was presently being used as loan collateral.

In August 1989, the town of Luperón became the recipient of long awaited access to private telephones. Prior to this time any calls, both national and international, had to be made at the *Oficina de telecomunicaciones*, a state-run office, located next to the post office, where a single phone and operator handled all calls providing the line was open and the rain did not interfere with the connection. A private telephone company called Codotel, which is affiliated with a North American based company, began to install private lines to homes and set up a region office on Avenida Salome Ureña in August 1989. Residents in town who wanted phone service had to pay the equivalent of U.S. \$40.00 to get the line installed and for initial phone rental. Almost 17 percent of the houses in Luperón had phones installed by the beginning of October 1989. During the process of interviewing household heads more telephones were being installed daily which explains why my sample population has double the percentage of households with telephones than the original house census conducted earlier in the year.

Having private telephones immediately facilitated communications within the community and with friends and relatives living elsewhere. Phone calls spreading gossip, prank calls, and obscene messages quickly became a part of community life. *Luperonenses* adapted this new medium to their traditional ways of controlling undesirable behavior, real and imagined, by using gossip and social ostracism to publicly

belittle an individual; however, now they could do it anonymously by telephone. By the end of 1989, the Codotel company was also busy disconnecting the lines of households who could not pay their bills. Hour long calls to the United States or to family members in distant parts of the Dominican Republic put a severe strain on the budget of more than one household in Luperón.

### The Story of Ana María

The improvement over time of housing follows a predictable pattern in Luperón reflecting the owner's desire for comfort and ability to accommodate these desires financially. Ana María's story is typical of a poorer *luperonense's* pattern of home improvement. Born in a small hamlet to a poor family near La Sabana in 1939, Ana María went to school for only two years and never really learned to read or write. Moving in with her first common-law husband at age sixteen, Ana María had her first child, a boy, at seventeen. Her first husband left her a year later and she moved in with her second husband six months later. Ana María moved to Luperón with her second common-law husband and two children in 1960. Her second husband left her in 1971 after her eighth child was born, leaving her a small plot of land on which stood a dirt floor, two room house with palm thatch roof.

Ana María worked washing clothes for neighbors and selling raffle tickets in order to feed her children. Sometimes her second ex-husband would send some money as child support, her friends and family helped with extra food or money when they could, but there were days when no food was available and the children went hungry. The children would gather fruit in the hills surrounding the town, hunt crabs to eat, and collect glass to sell for a few *centavos* to the men who came to collect bottles in town, in order to get by. In 1975, Ana María joined with a few friends to form a *san* or rotating credit

association.<sup>4</sup> Saving a peso every week and putting it into the *san* with seven other members, by the end of a year Ana María managed to save 48 pesos. Using 32 pesos which she had saved in the *san*, she bought enough cement mix, gravel, sand to cover the floor of her home. Paying 15 pesos to workers to mix and pour the floor for her existing home, plus an extra space outside the dwelling, by 1976 she had a cement floor and an outside patio. After three more years she had managed to add another two rooms for her growing family covering the existing cement slab. She now had four rooms. This same year the town brought the electrical poles and water pipes down into her street. She borrowed money from a friend, at 50 percent annual interest, so that she could be hooked up to the power lines and so that her home would have a private spigot in the yard.

Several years went by and Ana María's two oldest sons left home and began working. Things were better than before and Ana María managed to pay off her largest debts, as well as buy a new bed, curtains for the windows, and two rocking chairs. Then fate dealt her a happy blow. In 1986, Ana María won 10,000 pesos in the national lottery. Ana María decided to use the money to build a concrete house. She wanted a big house with four bedrooms, a large room to serve as both a dining and living room, an indoor bathroom, an outside porch, and a larger kitchen. Plans were drawn, concrete blocks were bought, and workers began construction.

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<sup>4</sup> A *san* is a rotating credit association used predominantly by low income groups in the Dominican Republic. A number of members agree to pay a set rate of money on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis to one member elected for their trustworthiness who saves the total amount until an agreed upon amount is saved. Then this amount is given to one of the members selected by being drawn in a random manner from the pool of players and the saving commences again. The first recipient continues to pay the set rate but does not participate in any of the future drawings. This continues until all members have received a share of the savings and then the *san* is terminated. The person responsible for holding the money may take an extra share as a fee for having the responsibility of collecting the money, but this is not always the case. For a more exhaustive study of the *san* in Dominican society I suggest the article by Douglass G. Norvell and James S. Wehrly entitled "A Rotating Credit Association in the Dominican Republic," in *Caribbean Studies* 9(1):45-52.

Ana María's oldest son who lived in Puerto Plata came to his mother one day asking for a 1000 pesos so that he could open his own small *colmado* in the neighborhood where he lived. He had enough for the building, but needed capital to purchase goods to sell. Ana María gave it to him. Her oldest daughter became ill with kidney stones and after going to the public hospitals with no relief, she asked her mother to pay for treatment at a private clinic. Ana María agreed and gave her daughter 500 pesos to pay for the operation. When the concrete was poured and the walls completed in her new house, Ana María discovered she had run out of money. Construction stopped and Ana María was forced to sell her cherished black and white television and borrow money so that she could put a thatch roof over her concrete house. Since 1987, she has saved money to replace the thatch with zinc and put up wooden windows in the concrete walls. Her children promise to help pay for a concrete ceiling soon, but the cost is formidable and surprise expenses keep arising. Nevertheless, Ana María dreams of the day when her house will be finished. Then she plans to save so that she can buy a new color television and some nice furniture similar to what she sees on the *telenovelas* that she watches most nights at her sister's house.

### The People of Luperón

The 1988 water survey conducted by the Luperón *ayuntamiento* lists 6000 individuals living in the urban zones of Luperón. This figure includes the villages of El Estrecho, La Sabana, and the town of Luperón. The population figures for the town of Luperón was given as 4000 inhabitants, but this figure included those inhabitants living outside the immediate confines of the town street network. I found that approximately 3500 inhabitants lived in the 663 houses found on the 19 streets and two urban *barrios* making up the town of Luperón according to figures given to me by a secretary working in the *síndico's* office. This indicates a mean household size of 5.28 individuals per



household. However, when I conducted my household survey of 58 households I found that the sample mean was only 4.33 individuals per household with a standard deviation of 1.51. The 1950 census of the town of Luperón indicated an average household size of 4.44 (see Chapter Three), which is similar to my 1989 household survey results, but well below the figure the town official gave me. However, the official figure for the town is closer to the national average which is 5.3 individuals per household (Báez 1985:27). The discrepancy can be partially explained by the fact that individuals questioned in my survey were asked who was living in the house at that time; the results did not include members who were currently living elsewhere but had not changed their official address.

### Race and Class in Luperón

The town of Luperón is predominantly composed of individuals of mixed racial heritage. The last comprehensive census which listed racial composition was conducted in 1950. At that time the town of Luperón was classified as being composed of 14 percent whites [European descent], 4 percent black [Afro-American], and 82 percent *indio* or mulatto [mixed European and African heritage] (ONC 1950:64-69). If one asks local inhabitants today how they would classify themselves the vast majority would state that they are *indios*. A few of the inhabitants would say they are white, but none would call themselves black. As in the rest of Dominican society, *luperonenses* view themselves as having a predominantly Latin-Hispanic cultural heritage. As Hoetink points out, Africanisms in the vocabulary, songs, and folklore are few in Dominican society and the Iberian cultural influence is clearly evident (1971:179). Just as in the Puerto Rico and Cuba, in the Dominican Republic the "aesthetic standard of 'high' culture" was that derived from Spanish heritage (Feijoo 1984:150). I remember being looked at with horror when telling several friends over a game of dominos that their

beloved Dominican music, the merengue, had both African-derived and European-derived components within its musical heritage (Bilby 1985:196). The concept of negritude and the African cultural heritage within Dominican society has never been adequately addressed. Only the Haitian families in Luperón, or those of known Haitian origin living in the community, were ever referred to as being black by *luperonenses*, unless someone meant to insult an individual.

Racially, the community of Luperón viewed itself as a relatively homogeneous population of *indios*, with only a few white and black families living in their midst. Class distinctions within the community of Luperón, however, are recognized and the community social structure is divided into three distinct classes. The few wealthiest families control much of the local economy, resources, and have a lot of political clout. Local paternalism mimics the style of national society and the local *tutumpote* (rich and powerful individual) commands respect, for to be in favor of such an individual means possible employment and disfavor can mean hardship for one's family. It is interesting to note that one of the wealthiest *luperonense*, Don Gregorio, is phenotypically quite dark skinned and he has facial characteristics which Dominicans would refer to as "bad" (distinctly Afro-American physical characteristics). Yet no one would ever dream of calling him black, *indio obscuro*, or even *trigueño obscuro*. His wealth, political influence, and education, place him in another, higher, racial category and as one informant said, "in this society money whitens." In Luperón, as elsewhere in the Dominican Republic and in Latin America (c.f. Hoetink 1971:188-189), beauty is phenotypically defined as having European features. Don Gregorio's spouse, and the spouses of his offspring, are all lighter skinned than they themselves are, and each successive generation of this powerful family is becoming progressively lighter skinned.

There is a growing middle-class in Luperón, but their numbers are still quite small, and they are not a unified political body. Professionals such as medical doctors, the agricultural administrators and agronomists, some of the school administrators, and some

of the local businessmen, are included in this category. Many of these individuals, those who work for the national government and were originally assigned to Luperón, came from other parts of the country and decided to stay in Luperón. Purchasing land and animals, they have steadily improved their financial positions, married into local families, and become respected members of their community. Another segment of the middle-class are those individuals who have gone abroad, usually to the United States, worked for many years and returned to open shops, restaurants, or retire. Financially secure, but having little political influence in the community, these individuals often are viewed with mild contempt by the more established families of Luperón. However, more and more of these individuals are returning and building modern homes in the center of town near the central plaza. Finally, there is a growing middle-class in Luperón who are associated with the introduction of tourism into the community. They are for the most part recent arrivals, having arrived in the community when the Luperón Beach Resort hotel opened its doors in 1987. They are musicians, taxi drivers, craftsmen, accountants, and administrative staff at the resort. Only a few of these individuals consider Luperón their home. For most, living in Luperón is only a temporary assignment to earn money until another, better, opportunity comes along. More will be said about this group in Chapter Six.

The urban poor in Luperón are numerous and certainly constitute the largest segment of Luperón society. Having little or no land, few skills, and little education, they must find work when and where they can. Predominantly *indios*, they work as agricultural laborers, shop clerks, fishermen, day laborers, or if they are lucky, for the town, municipal, or national government. Tourism, as will be discussed in Chapter Six, has provided few opportunities for the majority of Luperón's urban poor and, in many instances, has made their marginal existence even more precarious. Some have migrated to larger cities, or plan to make the move soon, looking for a chance to have more security and a better life for their children. For most, they live day by day, in perpetual

debt to the store keepers, and hope for some type of lucky *bendición* (blessing) from God which might help improve their lives.

### The Political Structure of Luperón

Every Dominican national, eighteen years and older, earlier if they are legally married, may vote every four years for the political party of their choice. In 1989, the ruling party was the Reformist Social Christian Party (PRSC) with Joaquín Balaguer in control of the executive office once again. The *municipio* of Luperón has a long history of supporting Balaguer and his earlier Reformist Party (PR) and, since 1984, his coalition party the PRSC. The people in the rural parts of the *municipio* are staunch supporters of Balaguer and his policies, and more than once I was told that Balaguer's chief opponent, Juan Bosch, was nothing more than a card carrying communist who would try to turn the Dominican Republic into another Cuba.

On the other hand, the townspeople of Luperón are not as strongly aligned with the PR and PRSC coalition. In the elections of 1978, and again in 1982, a majority of townspeople voted for members of the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) who won the national elections those years. First President Guzmán in 1978, and then President Jorge Blanco in 1982, were supported by a significant portion of the townspeople. During the eight years the PRD were in power a curious political mix occurred in Luperón where the *municipio's* highest office, that of the *síndico*, was controlled by a candidate of Balaguer's party, while several of the municipal council members (*regidores*) were members of the PRD. The townspeople's support of PRD was not forgotten by the government in power and two major projects, the building of modern dock facilities and the construction of the local medical clinic (*Sub-Centro de Salud Luperón*), were constructed by the PRD government in the early 1980s.



In 1990, the national and local elections were to be held again and the year 1989 was spent campaigning and recruiting votes. Peña Gómez, the leader of the main faction within the PRD came to Luperón and spoke. In 1989, President Balaguer sent money to the local INAPA office (state-run water company) to start repairing the old and leaking water pipes running from El Estrecho to Luperón, the fact that the money for this project came the year before the national elections was not lost on the more astute *luperonenses*. Juan Bosch's party, the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD), had a party office in town which was open almost everyday trying to recruit local members. Political discussions were the order of the day. Government workers naturally supported Balaguer since they knew if another party came to power their future employment was uncertain. Many of town youth were supporters of the PLD and openly campaigned for Juan Bosch. Peña Gómez had some local support but many of the older PRD supporters were still disillusioned by the fact that Jorge Blanco's government had been so openly corrupt. Rallies were held and campaign posters were put up, only to be defaced or covered almost immediately by the posters of other parties. Walls were painted yellow and purple (PLD) or red and white (PRSC) often to have another color paint thrown over them during the next night.

One thing many of the local people were looking forward to was the election of a new *síndico*. Many people I talked to felt that the present *síndico* had done little during the past four years for the *municipio* and, while the new *síndico* would most likely be from the PR party, they felt that the new candidate was an honest man who would try to do more for the *municipio*. Some individuals blamed the provincial party apparatus for not funding local projects, while others said that the present *síndico* was not sufficiently forceful in demanding money for the region. *Luperonenses* were cynical about the reason individuals sought political office. To quote one informant, "a good *síndico* spends two years' energy and money on the *municipio* and the last two years on himself, a bad *síndico* spends four years enriching himself."

The municipal judge and district attorney (*fiscal*) were also running for re-election, but most people were satisfied with their behavior in office and believed they would be re-elected. Paying extra money to get things done quickly is an acknowledged way of dealing with the governmental bureaucracy in Luperón, recognized as a fact of life by most people, and as long as an official's avarice is kept in check few negative comments are made. To get things done quickly, little bribes, *la mordida*, helps to grease the wheels of a notoriously inefficient bureaucracy. People told me that the police, government inspectors, military officials, local members of the judicial system, administrators of government documents, all work more efficiently with a little "extra" monetary inspiration. This helps keep the power in the hands of the wealthy who can afford to pay to get things done quickly. The poor offer their votes to local politicians in return for future favors. Die-hard *Balagueristas* continue to vote for the Reform Party hoping to one day get some land in a redistribution project, or a chance to get a new concrete block home in one of the government sponsored housing projects. At the local level the poor hope that the newly elected officials will remember their supporters and give them jobs on the municipal payroll. Checking water mains, doing janitorial work in the *ayuntamiento*, and garbage collection jobs are all controlled by the *síndico* who rewards his or her faithful followers with these positions. In this way politics in the community takes on a paternalistic aspect with the benevolent politician rewarding his loyal supporters with more economic opportunities.

During 1989, national strikes were called by political opponents of President Balaguer and the Reform Party. Protesting price increases on subsidized consumer goods such as gasoline and some food items, the whole nation shut down during these strikes. On June 19, 1989, began a 48 hour strike nationwide. President Balaguer was out of the country for a medical examination at the time. In Luperón, people prepared for the strike by purchasing several days worth of food. Prices increased in the stores overnight. Rice,

which cost one peso a pound on the 17th of June, was selling for two pesos a pound on the 18th.

The police and national militia were busy and extra men were sent in from elsewhere to prepare for the strike days. Road blocks were set up on the Imbert road and vehicles were checked for weapons, bottles, and gasoline. In the town of Luperón the police went around the community collecting old tires, which seemed to be a strange behavior until the start of the next day, when the intersections of the town became filled with burning tires. There was almost a holiday atmosphere in the town on the 19th of June. The air was filled with the smell of burning rubber and the stores were all closed and shuttered, but people spent the day with their families and friends drinking, playing games, eating, and telling stories; just like they would on an official holiday. Some of the town youth played games with the local police, lighting tires, which the police would come and extinguish, only to light others the moments the police left. The police patrolled the town in groups of two or three throughout the day and arrested two young men they caught lighting tires, but otherwise, no violence occurred. Nationally, hundreds of dissidents were arrested by police and several people were killed in clashes with the police and military, but on the second day of the declared national strike, June 20th, the stores of Luperón were again open for business even though *guagua* service to Imbert was still stopped. During this time tourists at the hotel were advised to stay within the confines of the resort complex which they did. No tours were scheduled, taxi service was stopped between the resort and the town, and no tourists were observed walking down to the town from the resort.

### Education in Luperón

Education in the Dominican Republic is theoretically free up through the secondary level and is compulsory up through the sixth grade (Bell 1981:161). School in Luperón

begins at age seven when the child first enters primary school. Luperón, in 1989, had a primary school which taught grades one through eight, and a high school, or *liceo*, with grades nine through twelve. Those who finish twelve grades and pass their final exams receive a *bachillerato* which entitles them to enter the university if they can afford to do so. Final exams are given at the end of each year are given to students in each grade and the results of these exams determine if a child will move up to the next grade.

This is the theory of public education in the Dominican Republic. Reality is quite different. School teachers are some of the most poorly paid public officials and most must support themselves in other ways in addition to their teaching duties. The teachers are unionized and quite militant in their quest to obtain higher salaries. In 1989, the teachers went out on a national strike requesting higher salaries and money to provide poorer students with subsidized breakfasts before school. Local teachers complained that many students came to school hungry and could not concentrate in class. Most teachers earned the same wages as a private in the military, approximately U.S. \$87.00 per month, which was not enough to support a single person, let alone a family. In hope of obtaining some small increases in their salaries and money to provide a glass of milk and a bread roll to hungry school children, the public school teachers went out on strike. The strike lasted much longer than anyone planned with negligible results. Almost three months passed, from March until June, and during this time no classes were held. When the strike ended without meeting the teachers' demands, the school children had to go to school during the summer months to make up for lost time.

I found that many of the *luperonenses* did not even meet the national expectations of completing the first six years of school. The cost of school uniforms and materials such as books and notebooks kept some children out of school. Many *luperonenses* older than 35 had never attended school. Those of school age during the early to late 1960s missed an opportunity to go to school while the nation was going through the turbulent years of transition from dictatorship, to democracy, to military junta, to civil war, and



back to democracy. Those older *luperonenses* who grew up in rural areas were especially likely to be illiterate.

The results of my household survey showed that of the 58 households investigated, 10 households (17.24 percent) were headed by someone who had never had any schooling. In addition, I found another 10 households (17.24 percent) were headed by individuals who had had three years or less of formal education. Another 4 households (6.9 percent) were headed by individuals who had completed fourth grade, one had completed fifth grade (1.7 percent), and 8 (13.8 percent) had completed sixth grade. In order to be considered for military or police service an individual must finish at least sixth grade in the Dominican Republic. In Luperón, 43 percent of the household heads did not have sufficient education to even serve in the national armed forces and over half the household heads (57 percent) had a sixth grade education or less. It should be noted that of the household heads listed as illiterate, only two were in their thirties, one was in his late forties, and the rest were over fifty years old.

Even among the poorest households education is valued as an avenue out of poverty and fathers and mothers hope that at least one of their children will stay in school and receive the *bachillerato*. The local instructor of adult education mentioned to me that in recent years more and more *luperonenses* were coming to evening classes in hope of finishing their primary and secondary educations. Many of the younger *luperonenses* attended classes on a part-time basis at the *Universidad Católica Madre y Maesta* in Santiago or at its satellite campus in Puerto Plata. They took classes when they could afford to, worked until they had saved enough money for another course or semester, and so on, trying to complete their studies.

When I examined literacy and gender, I found that a slightly higher, but hardly significant, percentage of the female household heads were literate compared to those headed by males. Of the 16 households where females were listed as the main providers, 14 of the women claimed to be literate (87.5 percent). In the 42 households where males

claimed to be the main providers, 34 of the men (81 percent) said they were literate. Of the 16 female headed households, two were headed by illiterate women (12.5 percent), five were headed by women who had less than a sixth grade education (31.25 percent), three were headed by individuals who had completed the sixth grade (18.75 percent), two were headed by women who had some secondary schooling but had never completed the *bachillerato* (12.5 percent), three were headed by women who had finished their high school educations (18.75 percent), and one was headed by a school teacher who had finished two years of university education (6.25 percent).

The majority of the female headed households (62.5 percent) were run by individuals who had a sixth grade education or less. A lower percentage of the 42 male headed households were run by individuals who had a sixth grade education or less, with only 23 households (55 percent) falling into this category. Eleven male headed households were run by individuals who had some secondary schooling but had never finished high school (26 percent), one male head had his high school degree (2 percent), five male head of households had received some university education (12 percent), and two male heads of households had completed university degrees (5 percent). While more male head of households completed university educations, a larger percentage of women head of households completed at least their high school educations. Talking with the local high school principal, I found out that approximately sixty percent (his figures) of the students in eleventh and twelfth grades were females. The school principal claimed that many young men left school earlier because more job opportunities became available to them than to young women. He said that there was also more pressure on the male students to help families financially and this was a frequent reason cited for leaving their studies.

The town of Luperón also had a private school called the *Escuela Bíblica Cristiana* run by a Protestant church group based in the United States. This school was recognized as offering a higher quality education by the *luperonenses*. Children of nonchurch members

could attend this private school if they could pay the tuition and the children of church members could attend even if they could not afford to pay. The church school also offered full scholarships to bright children of poorer *luperonense* households.

Educational materials covered were similar to those covered in the public schools except that a formal religious instruction was included. One big difference with the *Escuela Bíblica Cristiana* was that its teachers never went on strike, classes were smaller, and more individual attention was paid to each student. Many parents recognized the benefits of the private school and enrollment was reaching the school's maximum capacity in 1989.

### Organized Religion in Luperón

Some *luperonenses* are devoutly religious and attend church services on a weekly basis. However, it seems that the majority of inhabitants of Luperón do not attend any church services with any regularity. Praising the Lord and giving him thanks (*Gracias a Dios*) is done daily by most everyone, but if the local priest has more than forty people attending a Mass in the local Catholic Church, it is a rare day indeed. Many individuals in Luperón, while not disrespectful of Catholic doctrine, have little knowledge of its actual teachings. There is a single Catholic priest living in Luperón who must minister to the needs of all Catholics in the *municipio*. Even with the help of lay ministers, the Catholic priest is pressed to meet the needs of a parish with more than thirty-five thousand inhabitants.

Nevertheless, as Table 4 demonstrates the Catholic Church still influences the cycle of festivals and holidays in Luperón. The majority of official Dominican holidays are still days linked to religious observances. The most important holiday in the Dominican Republic is Holy Week or *semana santa*. Traditionally, local informants told me that women would wear black throughout the week, music, dancing, gambling, were

forbidden, and houses of ill-repute would be closed from Palm Sunday until Easter Sunday. People would stay home and celebrate quietly with their families.

Today, this tradition has been modified and Holy Week has become a vacation week when most offices and businesses are closed, and families go to the beach to party and frolic in the sun. Luperón fills up with people from Santiago and La Vega who come on specially chartered buses to go to the beach. Booths are set up on parts of the beach not controlled by the hotel where merchants sell rum, beer, soft drinks, ice cream, cotton candy, cooked chicken, and a variety of other items. The Luperón Beach Resort hotel administration stations extra guards near the beach during this holiday to ensure that Dominicans visiting the beach who are not guests do not trespass on hotel property.

This festive atmosphere lasts until Thursday evening in the town of Luperón. Thursday evening the local police make their rounds informing everyone in the community that loud music will not be tolerated until the Monday following Easter Sunday. While the beach is still thronged with Dominicans splashing in the surf and sand, the town is relatively quiet, the only noise being the engines of motorcycles passing on the streets. Families gathered to eat a large meal on Good Friday which typically consists of fresh fish. Also, a special culinary treat is made called "*habichuelas dulces*." This is a sweet dessert made of red kidney beans cooked with plantain, cinnamon, cloves, raisins, and lots of sugar to an almost pudding-like texture.

Christmas is also an important religious and secular holiday. Unlike the southern part of the country, where Christmas Day, the 25th of December, is the day for the family feast, Christmas Eve Day, the 24th of December, is the day for family celebration in Luperón. On this day approximately at 5 o'clock in the morning, just as every morning for the past 33 days since November 21st, the official start of the Christmas season in Luperón, a group of musicians and other members of the community parade through the town streets playing carols and welcoming everyone to Christmas. This is a lovely and friendly local tradition. Many *luperonenses* are awake to greet the carolers because they



have been up all night slowly roasting their pigs, or less frequently turkeys, on spits over fires for the Christmas meal.

Another local tradition is to serve ginger tea (*jengibre*) to friends and neighbors from November 21st until Christmas. This tea should be spicy and sweet. A group of people are served the tea in small cups, with one receiving a cup without any sugar. The person so served is expected to make the next batch of tea the following day. This is reminiscent of the tradition behind the Mardi Gras cake in New Orleans; where the recipient of the figurine is expected to make or purchase the cake the following year.

Mentioned previously in Chapter One was that the patron saint of Luperón is San Isidro Labrador. Considered to be one of the patron saints of farmers by the Catholic Church, his feast day is May 15th, and a week long celebration is held at this time in the central park. Games, drinking, and dancing are all part of the festival held in the honor of this Catholic protector of the community. There are many other holidays, both religious and secular, observed by members of the community. Table 4 shows a list of all national and local holidays celebrated by the inhabitants of Luperón. While not all are official holidays involving days off from work, a substantial proportion of the population observe these holidays by going to Church, family worship, or general recognition.

The Catholic Church in the Dominican Republic has a severe national shortage of clergy and lay ministers. Rural parish priests must minister to the needs of the rural Dominican populations which often number in the tens of thousands (in Luperón there was one priest for the whole *municipio* numbering approximately 35,000 inhabitants). Into this void have entered, with increasing visibility, the establishment of many different Protestant church organizations. The proselytizing efforts of several evangelical Christian organizations are being rewarded with growing membership in Luperón. In 1989, the town of Luperón had four established Protestant church groups. All of these local Protestant churches are affiliated with church groups in the United States. Already mentioned was the *Iglesia Bíblica Cristiana*, which offers private education, and is

affiliated with a Southern Baptist church group in Tampa, Florida. There are also local congregations of Jehovah Witness, Seventh Day Adventists, and a Pentecostal congregation called the *Iglesia Evangélica Asamblea de Dios*. These Protestant churches are also responsible for bringing more tourists into the community. In 1989, four groups of Americans, one group from a U.S. Pentecostal church and three from Southern Baptist churches in Florida, came to the community to work and worship with their *luperonense* affiliates. Three of these groups came with donations of clothes, books, and money for their respective Luperón counterparts and only stayed overnight. Another group of Americans spent two weeks in the community working on a construction project for the *Iglesia Bíblica Cristiana* helping to build the pastor's home and finish enlarging the school. Members of this group were observed buying tourist goods at the local gift shops, eating in several of the tourist restaurants, and going to the local beach. Three of these visitors also hired a local fisherman to take them on a tour of the bay and see the flocks of egrets roosting in the mangrove trees.

Table 4: National and Local Holidays observed in Luperón in 1989.

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| January   | 1: New Year's Day.  |
| January   | 6: Epiphany - "Day of the Kings" - children receive gifts.  |
| January   | 21: Day of Our Lady of Altagracia.  |
| January   | 26: Juan Pablo Duarte Day.  |
| February  | 27: Independence Day.   |
| March     | 2: Police Day.  |
| March     | 17: Viernes de Dolores. Marks the beginning of Holy Week.   |
| March     | 19: Domingo de Ramos. Palm Sunday.  |
| March     | 24: Viernes Triste. Good Friday.  |
| March     | 25: Sábado de Gloria.   |
| March     | 26: Domingo de Resurrección. Easter Sunday.   |
| May       | 1: Labor Day.   |
| May       | 15: Day of San Isidro Labrador. Patron Saint of Luperón.  |
| June      | 17: Corpus Christi.   |
| August    | 16: Dominican Restoration Day.  |
| September | 24: Day of Our Lady of Mercy.   |
| November  | 30: Day of San Andrés. Local tradition, which was observed only being celebrated by a few people, is to throw white powder from rice, wheat, talcum, or eggs at individuals in fun. Local inhabitants said that some mischievous youngsters sometimes throw dirty water at their victims. |
| December  | 24: Christmas Eve.  |
| December  | 25: Christmas.  |

Membership in these Protestant churches in Luperón is increasing rapidly according to church leaders interviewed. Members in all these churches forswear drinking, gambling, extramarital affairs, and several also consider dancing as sinful. After interviewing several of the local church leaders, it became apparent from these interviews that membership in these Protestant churches gives certain economic advantages, as well as spiritual support, to those individuals belonging to the congregation. These leaders told me that members are taught to help fellow members in need. Tithing among members establishes a fund used to help the less fortunate in the congregation. When asked if nonmembers are helped as well, the answer given was yes by all three leaders interviewed, but this answer was qualified by one leader who said that there is so much need in his congregation that little remains to help others.

Several of the wealthier *luperonense* families belong to the Pentecostal and Seventh Day Adventist church groups. However, not all wealthy *luperonenses* view the expansion of these evangelical Protestant churches into the community favorably. One man, belonging to one of the wealthiest *luperonense* families, was openly furious when he discovered that his teenage daughter had become a member of the Pentecostal Church and was trying to get his wife and son to attend the church. The daughter continued to attend despite his protestations, but the man refused to allow either his son or wife to go to any of the Pentecostal services. Once it was clear how strongly he felt about this issue they complied with his decision.

Faith healers and charismatic preachers come to the community on occasion and hold revival meetings. In August 1989, one such individual came to Luperón and spent a Sunday afternoon devoted to preaching and healing. Large numbers of *luperonenses* attended this service. When asked whether or not they believed that individuals were healed by the preacher, several individuals responded by more or less saying "perhaps they are, perhaps they are not, but the power of God can heal and who is to say that this man is not blessed."

### Folk Beliefs and Folk Healing

Folk religious beliefs abound in the community, some common throughout Europe and North America as well as the Dominican Republic, others unique to Dominican society. Many *luperonenses* practice folk rituals for spiritual protection. Charms to ward off evil and protect the members of the household can be found in many homes. Folk remedies play an important part in local pharmaceutical practices. While little was learned about the existence of witchcraft or black magic, it was clearly conveyed to me by several informants that certain members of the community still believe that it is practiced locally. People were naturally reluctant to discuss such things, but one individual mentioned to me that many years ago the town of Luperón was reputed to have several individuals whose knowledge and skill in the black arts made them feared throughout the region.

Today, this fear of the supernatural is still present among many members living in the community. To call someone a witch (*brujo/a*) is considered a serious insult by many *luperonenses* and is not said lightly. Some community members fear the night and claim that owls are manifestations of the Devil or his underlings. Various inhabitants told me that to hear the cry of an owl at night is a sign that someone close will soon die. As mentioned previously in this chapter, homes often have aloe hung in the ceiling rafters to help protect the inhabitants from evil spirits and unhappiness. Also, some informants told me that financial success often comes with the help of supernatural intervention. One of the wealthier members of the community, not known for his charity, was mentioned to me as having a "pact with the Devil."

Many individuals in Luperón consider dreams to be important portents of the future. To dream that someone is going to die is the cause of great consternation. Dreaming of ghosts, witches, or the Devil, was the reason cited on two occasions for holding a private *vela* to cleanse the soul of any evil influences. Dreams can also instruct individuals about future events and relate positive information. One man who lived on my street came to



me one day excited about a dream in which I had appeared. He said that if I would tell him my *cédula* number he would use it in that week's lottery. The fact that I had no *cédula* was a disappointment to him but I gave him my birth date instead. To my surprise, and his delight, he actually won a small amount of money that week using the numbers of my birth date. He said that he always uses the numbers of people he dreams about because this was the way the heavens spoke to people.

Taino ceramic pieces discovered in the region are frequently displayed in Luperón houses. These artifacts are believed by many to have magical properties which protect residents of the household from evil. People in rural areas of the *municipio*, as in other parts of the country, sometimes put Taino ceramic pieces into water urns to keep the drawn water fresh. Several of my oldest informants told me a beautiful legend that the Taino never really died, but escaped the Spaniards by diving into the ocean to live under the sea. They told me that the Taino still live in underwater caves where they spend their days fishing, playing, or combing their long, beautiful and shining, straight black hair. They told me that some lucky individuals, usually fishermen, see these Taino and to do so is a sign of good fortune.

Herbal remedies abound in the community of Luperón. The belief in hot and cold foods, common throughout Latin America, also play an important part in the daily lives of many *luperonenses*. One wants to maintain a humoral balance between hot and cold to remain healthy. Certain foods are considered hot and others cold. For instance, of the many varieties of plantains grown in the region, all were considered to be "hot" and if a pregnant woman ate too many her child might be "burned" in the womb and be born with a birthmark. On the other hand, birthmarks were also said to be the result of a pregnant woman desiring something to eat while pregnant and not being able to obtain it. While this was not observed, several women mentioned that the insides of the calabash gourd are often prepared after a woman has given birth to help tighten the uterus, prevent stretch marks, and restore the balance of a woman's insides. The calabash is scraped out

and boiled to make a drink for the new mother. The peels of sweet manioc, or *yuca*, are frequently rubbed on the knees of young children so that they will run faster as they grow older. Women going through menopause often rub *tuna de españa*, a type of cactus found growing wild in the region, and in many other parts of Latin America, on their foreheads because it "cooled" the effects of hot flashes.

Many of my informants told me that to open a refrigerator with wet hair can cause sickness. In the same vein, many women who are menstruating do not wash their hair because this may cause illness and death. It was related to me by several individuals that one should avoid washing one's hair on Friday since this was the day that Christ died. The offshore fishermen sailing from Luperón, too, avoid starting their journeys on Fridays because it is considered bad luck for the same reason. Many of the offshore fishermen also carry statues of Christ or pictures of Saints on their boats as protection from bad luck. Two Saints particularly favored by the fishermen as the special protectors of all fishermen are San Pedro and San Humberto. Before leaving to fish the offshore banks, it is not uncommon for a boat captain to light a candle in offering to the Saint in order to protect the boat and crew while at sea.

Death and funeral rites have changed little from those in the nineteenth century described by Hoetink (1982:209). Whenever possible family members gather together to be with the terminally ill person and conduct a wake, or *velorio*, during the final day or hours of life, and a priest is summoned to give last rites. Typically, the deceased is buried the day after he or she passes away. A person is buried, never cremated, and if possible a priest, or minister if the person is Protestant, officiates at the burial. When clergymen are unavailable, an individual who is considered to be particularly pious is invited to read from the Bible over the grave.

Mourners in Luperón traditionally wear black at the funeral, just as they do in the United States, and it is expected that women weep openly and are demonstrative in their grieving. This is considered a sign of love and respect for the deceased. After the

funeral, mourners return to the home of the deceased's family. Here, female relatives close to the individual who had passed away join together in a back room to continue their laments and weeping. Outside, the men gather together to smoke, eat, and tell stories about the deceased. In Luperón the drinking of alcoholic beverages is not considered appropriate at wakes, nor is music or dancing permitted; however, drinking by some men was observed at two of the *velorios* attended.

Nine days after someone has died another gathering of family and friends is held called the *vela de muerto*. During the interim period between the funeral and the *vela de muerto* neighbors show respect for the deceased by not playing music or their television too loudly. At the *vela de muerto* women relatives close to the deceased again withdraw to a back room to mourn together. Other women prepare food for guests and men again gather together to eat, tell stories, drink coffee, and pass the time giving condolences to relatives of the deceased. In Cambiaso, a small village of 300 inhabitants, the whole village mourned the passing of an old woman by forsaking loud music and dancing until the *vela de muerto* was over. It is interesting to note here that a group of tourists who came to Cambiaso from the Luperón Beach Resort hotel with the Bushwhacker Jeep Tour, expecting to listen to a live merengue band while they ate lunch on the edge of the beach, were quite accepting of the fact that no music was to be performed that day as soon as they were informed about the cultural significance of not playing music as a way of showing respect for the dead.

After the *vela de muerto* is completed, the period of mourning for family members continues for various lengths of time depending on their relationship with the deceased. Close family members such as husbands, wives, sons and daughters may celebrate each monthly anniversary of the deceased's passing for the first year. Wearing black, especially for close female relatives, is considered appropriate for three months to a year. Old widows may dress in black for the rest of their lives in memory of their husbands. In many households, each year on the anniversary of the deceased's passing, close

relatives will conduct another *vela de muerto*. It is not uncommon for families to mourn the passing of an individual for five, ten, even fifteen years after they have died. A Catholic family may have a priest say a special Mass for the soul of the deceased on the anniversary of the death.

Other important rituals include folk christenings and *velas de gracias* (also called *velas de ofrecer*). *Velas de gracias* are often held to give thanks to God for helping the family through a particularly trying crisis or to ask for divine intervention during a period of uncertainty. An individual who decides to hold a *vela de gracias* sets up an altar in his or her home on a table covered with a white tablecloth which is further adorned with pictures of the Madonna with child, the Saints, and/or a crucifix, with two or three candles flanking the ornaments.

One *vela de gracias* observed was held to celebrate the successful birth of a grandson and the good health of the new mother. Friends and family were invited to attend and a core of older men and women spent hours singing songs praising God and the Saints while sitting around the altar. The old men would sing one verse and the women would sing the refrain, then the men would sing the next verse, and the women would respond. The moment one candle burnt out it was replaced by another. There was no drinking or eating while the group was singing, but following four hours of singing all present were invited to a large meal. This meal was a feast for the household and included a *sancocho* (stew) with both beef and pork in it (this was a special treat in a household where chicken or *bacalao* was normally eaten only once or twice a week) and coffee was served afterward. The woman who held the *vela* told me that this was her way of giving thanks to God for protecting her daughter through the trials of birth and giving her a fine grandson.

Another *vela de gracias* was celebrated by a fisherman and his wife to give thanks for his safe return from a particularly difficult return voyage from the Mouchoir Bank during August 1989. High winds, rain squalls, and a troublesome motor had made the



return journey perilous for all on board. Again, the altar was set up and candles were burnt in offering. Prayers were said and songs were sung around the altar. Several members of the boat crew and their families attended the *vela*. Pictures of San Humberto and San Pedro were given prominent positions next to the crucifix on the altar. After several hours of singing and prayers a meal was served with both chicken and fish being offered to those present. The fishermen all agreed that the last trip had been more hazardous than usual and only faith had brought them safely back to port. One member of the boat crew told me several days later that he felt the boat was lucky, in part because the captain was a devout man, with no vices (*vicios*), whose faith in God helped protect all who sailed with him.

Giving birth also is linked to important ritual behavior in Luperón. Frequently, the new mother and child will remain in semi-seclusion at home for forty days after the birth. During this time she is not expected to perform her normal daily activities of cooking, cleaning, or tending the other needs of the household. The new mother often avoids foods that are believed to negatively affect her ability to lactate or the quality of her milk such as citrus products and plantains. While she may receive visitors in her home, those new mothers who practice this postpartum behavior do not leave the house except for medical reasons. Individuals in the community told me this isolation period is important because it allows the woman to recover from the effects of childbirth and she can devote her full attention to the newborn. Not all women in the community practice this seclusionary postpartum behavior; some women because of the economic necessity of providing for the household are forced to curtail the length of time spent at home and others choose not to follow this practice for other personal reasons.

Baptism is an important rite of passage for all *luperonenses*. In the majority of cases children are baptized in a Church sometime during their first year. The Church baptism is held as soon as there is sufficient money to pay for the rite's additional costs such as food, drink, and new clothes, which are part of celebrating such an occasion. The

godparents of the child being baptized normally help to pay for these attendant costs. In addition to the Church baptism, many parents will have their child go through a folk ritual called a *bautizo de agua*. This ritual can be considered as a type of folk christening. This simple ceremony is normally done at the home of the new parents soon after the birth of the newborn, usually after the new mother has completed her 40 days of seclusion if she follows this practice, at a time when most family members and close friends can be together in attendance.

The parents of the child ask two relatives or close friends to be the godmother (*madrina*) and godfather (*padrino*) of the child. In the only case where a *bautizo de agua* was observed, the baby's great aunt conducted the ceremony. The great aunt was considered a pious woman whose age and wisdom would help protect the child. The baby, who was three months old at the time, was carried into the house in the arms of the mother with the father at her side. The godparents, each holding a burning candle, stood on either side of the child and parents. Those present recited the Lord's Prayer, water was placed on the forehead of the baby three times in the form of the cross, and then a bitter herb called *ruda*, known in English as goat's rue, was waved three times over the child's head in the shape of the cross. According to the old woman who conducted the ceremony, goat's rue is a particularly powerful herb useful for sweeping away any bad spirits in the vicinity and protects the child from any supernatural harm. After the ceremony those individuals who stood as godparents called the parents of the child *comadre* and *compadre* and the child should later in life always address them by the title of *padrino* or *madrina*. The godparents selected for the *bautizo de agua* have the same strong spiritual obligations to care for the child in case the parents died as those individuals who stand as godparents in the formal Church baptism ceremony.

## Family Life and Gender in the Community

### Growing up in a *Luperonense* Family

The majority of *luperonenses* live in nuclear families composed of a man and woman living together in a common-law union, called a *unión libre* or *unión estable*, and their children. It is also not uncommon for adults in Luperón to take care of children of close relatives, or the children of *compadres*, if circumstances prohibit their parents from adequately supporting them. The legal and religious ideal social practice in Luperón, and the Dominican Republic, is the monogamous union between a man and a woman.

Rural Dominican society is still imbued with a strong double standard about proper roles for males and females. Males are expected to be virile and the *machote*, or rake, is much admired by his fellow males. On the other hand, women are expected to be subservient to males and the concept of *virginidad*, or virginity, until marriage is the ideal. The ideal and reality do not always match. Stories were told in Luperón of how a bridegroom could send his new bride home if he found her not to be a virgin on their wedding night. When asked if anyone could ever recall this actually happening, no one remembered such a case.

Extramarital affairs by men do not tend to "raise eyebrows" in Luperón. Several men have even gone so far as to have several families at the same time. Polygyny by some males, while not legal, is not uncommon in the community. A man may have a wife in Luperón, a lover elsewhere, or vice versa. Sometimes a man will legally recognize the children of his lover, bring them to be raised in the home with his wife, and make them heirs to his property just as the children of his legal wife. Some women accept this behavior with little comment, others use it as grounds to divorce or separate. Many poorer women who are not involved in a legal or consensual union (*unión libre*), are willing to be the lover of a married man as long as a certain degree of economic security

for their offspring and themselves is forthcoming from such a relationship; however, those women who have a certain degree of economic security due to their own skills or resources rarely are willing to become involved in relationships of this kind.

Many of the women in Luperón, while rarely engaging in any extramarital affairs, will have relationships with several men during the course of their lives for both romantic and economic reasons. In common terminology, this practice is referred to as a form of serial monogamy. Female serial monogamy often results in the children from several fathers living together with their common mother. In Luperón, as elsewhere in Latin America, there is a strong tendency towards matrifocality, with the bond between the mother and her children being particularly strong. In many homes it is the mother who provides stability and "continuity for their children, who may have different fathers" (Black 1986a:62).

Legal wives and women in established consensual unions may put up with the occasional philandering of husbands as long as they are not indiscreet. If the other woman is not located in the same town, family income is not affected, and local gossip is avoided, it is known that some wives turn a blind eye to the dalliances of their men. This type of behavior might change in the future with the threat of AIDS, which had already made its appearance in the community in 1989 and had claimed the lives of several *luperonenses* by 1992, but people in the community are still generally uninformed about what causes this disease and most have not yet begun taking precautions against its spread.

Women in Luperón do not have the same sexual freedom that the men enjoy. They can never have a lover while being married and expect to receive any community acceptance. When such occasions arise social ostracism is immediate and harsh. Local women who engage in this type of behavior are called whores and sluts by men and women alike. Gossip (*chisme*) in the town, while rarely directed against a male who has many lovers, is swiftly leveled against any female, young or old, who either engages in



premarital or extramarital sex. There was even one case where an anonymous caller from Luperón phoned the husband in a consensual union, who was living in New York, to say that his wife had a male lover at his house in Luperón for three days. The fact that the male "lover" was the woman's brother from the capital, and that the husband knew the brother was visiting, saved the woman from any marital problems. However, other women in the community, in particular young women, are frequently ostracized fiercely for engaging in relationships with local married men.

When a *luperonense* man and woman legally separate or divorce it is typical to divide joint property evenly. What typically occurs is that the woman receives the house, most of the furniture, and custody of the children. The man is given the majority of the farm animals, land, and farming equipment. If he is a merchant he retains control of the store but is expected to pay a share of the profits to the woman until she receives one-half of the store's value. The man is expected to pay child support; however, it is difficult to enforce these laws, and many children are deserted by fathers when a family splits apart. If a woman is not from Luperón, and wants to return to her family, joint property is sometimes sold or the value of this property is given to the woman in cash by the ex-husband.

Women typically marry or establish their first stable relationship with a man before they are twenty-one years old in Luperón. People told me that more women are waiting later to get married than previously, but most women still consider themselves "old," and unlikely to find husbands, if they reach twenty-five and are still single. Young single men in Luperón between the age of twenty and thirty told me that they would prefer to marry a woman who was significantly younger than themselves, preferably between eighteen and twenty years of age. In Cambiaso, the small village to the east of Luperón, young women begin relationships even earlier. The majority of the relationships in this community are consensual unions and not legal marriages. Four of the women in the village began living with their husbands at the age of thirteen and had their first child at

fourteen. Most had at least one children before their eighteenth birthday, and one woman who was only twenty-one in 1989 already had five children.

Children are loved and cherished in the community. Most young women look forward to starting a family and a childless woman is often pitied by other women. My wife and I were constantly asked when we would have our first child after we married. When we returned to Luperón in 1992, still childless, people asked us if something was wrong since we had been married for over two years and still did not have any children. The fact that we chose not to start a family until we had finished our schooling was understood by most members of the community, but several said we should not wait too long since my wife was getting old (she was 28 at the time).

The only type of birth control commonly utilized by community members was a woman having a tubal ligation after her third or four child. Condoms are freely available at the local hospital, but few males use condoms claiming that they reduce the pleasure of sex. Birth control pills, diaphragms, and other female contraceptive devices are available in the Dominican Republic but going to private clinics for advice and proper prescriptions or fittings is too expensive for many of the poorer *luperonense* women and the free devices or birth control pills given to individual in government clinics for free, or at nominal cost, have been reported to cause negative side effects which makes many local women fearful of utilizing them.

Children will continue to live with their parents until they marry, or begin cohabitation with someone for the first time, and it is rare that a single male will move out to live alone. There were only two young females in the community who lived alone and both were prostitutes. When a young couple want to marry, or start living together, they must first find a place to live since neolocal residence patterns are the norm, just as they are in the English-speaking societies of the West Indies (M. G. Smith 1962:244). A couple can be legally married in a church or in a civil ceremony in the Dominican Republic. Civil ceremonies in 1989 cost between U.S. \$16.00-\$32.00, depending on

whether the ceremony was conducted in the office of the justice of the peace or if the official came to a private residence where the ceremony was being held. This figure does not include the attendant costs for either the church or civil ceremony which is where the real costs lie.

A *madrina* and *padrino* are asked to honor the couple being married by helping with the costs of the wedding. The *madrina* is expected to buy the wedding cake and the *padrino* is expected to supply the wedding party with beverages. They also sign the marriage contract as witnesses. Among the poorer segments of Luperón it is a common custom for the father of the bride to give his "blessing" to the upcoming marriage by telling the future bridegroom that he would not object if the couple began having sexual relations prior to the actual ceremony. This is often done one or two months before the actual wedding and more than one recently married couple had their first child seven or eight months after their wedding. This is the cause of some joking among the town wags, but does not result in any real negative criticism in the community.

### Sexual Division of Labor

The sexual division of labor in a *luperonense* household is clearly defined. One could say that there is a definite cult of the male in Dominican society. Women tend to occupy an inferior position to males in the public arena and in the home. The male is expected to be the dominant provider (this is an ideal and in many households women provide a significant share of the household income), unless the household is not headed by a male, and the husband demands to be shown respect by his wife and children.

Husbands and adult males are served first at all meals, are given the best seats in the house, and take little, or no, active role in household chores such as cleaning, washing, sewing, food preparation, or daily food purchases. The adult males in the household are expected to repair the house, butcher animals, and make decisions concerning family

finances. The mother is expected to take care of the majority of child-rearing tasks with the father stepping in occasionally to help with the task of disciplining unruly children.

Few men even know how to cook. One older man in the community, whose wife had died only two months previously, invited a younger woman to live with him. While local female gossips said it was too soon after his wife's death to begin another relationship, many of the men in the community supported his actions. Claiming that the average man is helpless without a woman to take care of daily household chores, they justified his actions by saying that his only sister was too busy with her own family to provide for him as well, and getting someone to look after his needs was a necessity for such an old man.

In the fields men do the heavy work of preparing the plots for sowing, clearing land, milking, and driving the cattle. Women and men together share the chores of weeding and harvesting most crops. Males and boys were always observed doing the spraying of pesticides which is considered dangerous work. Many women in the community work outside the home and make significant contributions to the household income. Luperón even had a female *síndica* and *fiscal* in the past. Some women in the community own their own stores, restaurants, farms, and one even is the sole owner of a small hotel/restaurant. Many young single women work in stores as clerks, waitresses, and cooks. Many of the more educated young women also find employment in local government offices. However, the majority of married women in the community remain in the home to raise the children and be homemakers.

Parental authority is rarely questioned by children. Even late in life the words of one's parents are carefully listened to and children are expected to show their parents respect at all times. Married children send money and gifts to their parents whenever they can afford to do so and people speak badly about offspring who have the economic resources but do not help their parents if they are in need. Young men are expected to go forth and "sow some wild oats" before settling down and, as long as this behavior does



not become the subject of public ridicule, little is said. Young girls and women are more carefully watched by their parents. They are usually forbidden to go to public dances unless they are accompanied by a male relative as chaperone and a "proper" young woman will have potential suitors visit her at home under the watchful eye of her relatives. Nevertheless, the high number of children born to unwed mothers in the community bears testament to the ability of young people to get around the strict conventions enforced by their parents.

### Economic Conditions in the Community: Traditional Ways of Making a Living

From the economic perspective Luperón is a town inhabited by individuals engaged in many different activities. The natural environment, financial considerations, and the town's place in regional, national, and international markets, limit the alternatives each individual has in choosing occupations. Mentioned in Chapter One was that occupational multiplicity is the norm in this community, as it is among most impoverished peoples. Historical factors, too, determine what is produced in the region. The role of the *luperonenses* and their role in the global political economy during the past five hundred years since colonization was mentioned in passing in the beginning of this chapter and a more detailed history is available to the reader in Appendix B. Let it suffice to say here that Luperón is not an economically isolated community, nor has it been throughout its history, and the introduction of tourism into the region as yet has had little effect on the traditional industries or in the established marketing patterns of the region.

Luperón has been always linked to regional, national, and international markets which, in turn, have influenced local occupational patterns. Regional tourism has been superimposed on an already intricate economic system whose production and distribution patterns, already well established, have failed to be altered greatly by the introduction of this new industry. Local economic linkages between the tourist resort and traditional

industries are weak because existing production and marketing arrangements do not promote direct contact between the producer and consumer. The following is a brief introduction to the traditional economic activities of the *luperonenses* prior to the introduction of enclave tourism.

The lack of minerals in the region dictate that the majority of local inhabitants make their living either from agriculture, manufacturing, or commerce. During the nineteenth and early twentieth century the lumber industry was an important source of employment in the region. Hardwoods such as mahogany were cut down and dragged down to the coast where ships from Europe and the United States would load them for transport. During this period the lack of roads and adequate transportation links made agriculture basically a subsistence oriented occupation. The larger landowners raised cattle and horses which were driven to markets located in Puerto Plata or Santiago; otherwise, shifting cultivation, which consisted of clearing small plots of land, surrounding them with wooden palisades to protect the subsistence crops being cultivated from foraging bands of wild and semi-wild hogs, was the main livelihood for the poor *campesino*.

Today, the fact that most land in the *municipio* is individually owned, and little land is left uncultivated as already mentioned earlier in this chapter, forces the bulk of the growing population into increasingly marginal economic circumstances. Agricultural holdings are getting smaller, the land is less fertile than before, and many individuals are being forced to seek alternative ways of making a living because they are landless or they own holdings too small to provide a livelihood. Still, many *luperonenses* find their primary economic occupations in agricultural pursuits as either large landowners, small farmers, sharecroppers, laborers, or some combination of the last three.

The town of Luperón is important regionally because it provides services to those agricultural populations living in the surrounding areas. Providing these services employs many of the townspeople. Some people work in municipal or national government offices; some own stores, repair machinery, provide transportation, do

construction work, or work as support staff for individuals involved in these other occupations. Others do day labor, finding work off and on when they can, or try their hands at a variety of informal sector activities such as selling coconuts, *arepas* (fried cornmeal griddlecakes), lottery tickets, organizing raffles, and selling homemade sweets on the streets. They are all participants in a capitalistic system which is undergoing a slow modernization from the top-down, with the elites garnering the vast benefits of this transformation and the poorer segments of society trying to hedge against the constant insecurity of daily life by exploiting any and all economic niches not already controlled by the elites.

#### The Economic Pursuits of Marcos Martínez

Few *luperonenses* are oriented to only one economic activity. Even the rich will be involved in several activities at the same time such as agriculture, real estate, and owning one or two local businesses. It is important to invest one's money in goods and land in the Dominican Republic because of the unpredictable rate of inflation and the lack of confidence in many of the country's banks. The poorest Dominican households, and even many of the middle-class households, engage in occupational multiplicity in order to ensure that at least one source of income, however small, is always available. If one member of the household's business fails, or if a crop does not yield as much as was hoped, there is another source of income to help support the household. The following is a brief story of one *luperonense* whose economic history is an illustration of a successful struggle to improve his lot in life.

Marcos Martínez is not a poor man, nor did he start out impoverished. When his father died he left Marcos 25 *tareas* of land and enough cash to make a down payment on a used 90 cc. Honda motorcycle. Marcos also had completed the tenth grade when his father died and he left school to help support his mother. He was the only son and the

youngest child. His sisters were married and had moved to Santo Domingo with their husbands. After leaving school Marcos worked part-time as a secretary for the local Director of Public Schools and tended his land holding and that of his mother (35 *tareas*). He decided to grow plantains on his 25 *tareas* because they demanded less work than most crops and his land was on a well-drained slope protected from the winds coming out of the northeast. Two years after he married Lydia, at the age of twenty-four, his mother died. His mother's land was divided among the children and Marcos received another 15 *tareas* near his plot with plantains. Marcos invested the money he had saved in several pigs and began to raise pigs on the plot of land his mother left him.

The years passed and Marcos and Lydia soon were the proud parents of three children. To support the growing family, and save money in order to open a shop which was his dream, Marcos began to work as a *motorconcho* driver during the weekday afternoons when his secretarial duties were not needed, and he also worked nights in one of the local *cafeterías* as a bartender/waiter. His work kept him occupied most of the time and Lydia and eldest son Julio took over the daily task of tending the pigs.

After several years of saving Marcos believed that he was ready to open his own shop in Luperón. He transformed the living room of his house into a display room and put up signs outside advertising his new business, a hardware and dry goods store. His sisters' husbands loaned him some money in addition to his own savings so that he could stock his shop with a few cassette players and radios in addition to other items such as construction tools, lamps, door knobs, etc., and the shop opened in the summer of 1989. His shop provided certain items such as electric tools and music tapes which local inhabitants had previously had to travel to distant urban centers in order to purchase, but most other goods in the store were available in other town shops and initially business was slow.

Marcos stopped working as a bartender/waiter at night but remained employed as a secretary for the school system. Initially, he continued working occasionally as a



*motorconcho* while his wife Lydia remained in the store handling clients. In 1992, the store was still open and had actually increased its inventory to include a wider range of household items such as cooking utensils, cutlery, and plates. Marcos found these items to be particularly lucrative. He undersold other stores in town because he purchased these wares wholesale in the capital through contacts he made with the help of one of his brothers-in-law. He had repaid his loan to his brothers-in-law and his store was beginning to show a profit. At the end of 1991, Marcos quit working as a *motorconcho* completely and he also managed to buy another 15 *tareas* of land next to the plot he inherited from his mother. He bought materials to build a chicken coop and purchased fifteen chickens of the white-feathered variety locally called "*americano*." He now had 25 *tareas* of land devoted to crop production, 25 *tareas* devoted to raising pigs (he had over 15 pigs and many piglets which he sold, and 5 *tareas* devoted to a growing flock of chickens whose eggs he planned to sell.

When asked in 1992 what his next project would be, Marcos said he planned to buy more land for his chickens and pigs and build a new house for his family. He planned to transform the present family home into a larger shop and maybe begin selling clothes in addition to the other items he already stocked. His wife still took care of the daily storekeeping duties, while Marcos and his two sons Julio and Rafael tended the animals and crops during the afternoon. In 1992, Marcos still worked as a secretary for the public schools but he told me that he was thinking of quitting soon because his businesses required most of his time and it was difficult to travel to Santo Domingo every month on a Friday and hurrying back Sunday so that he would not miss work Monday morning.

Marcos is energetic and has a flair for business. He managed to become a successful entrepreneur in Luperón during the course of ten years of sacrifice and hard work. What helped him to succeed was the fact that he is fairly well-educated, knows what local inhabitants will buy and what his land will grow at minimum risk and effort, and the fact

that he had sufficient working capital to see his family through the rough times when sales were slow. He always is involved in several occupational ventures which minimizes his overall risk. Not all *luperonenses* are as fortunate as Marcos and his family, but most attempt to minimize risk and optimize returns by engaging whenever possible in several occupations.

### Land Tenure Patterns

The importance of land in Dominican society cannot be underestimated. Land, naturally, should be viewed as a unit of production. There is another aspect of land, the symbolic value of its ownership, which is equally important to the average Dominican. Few topics can generate more controversy or interest in a rural Dominican community than a dispute over landownership, or the chance of obtaining a *parcela* (a small plot of land) through a government sponsored redistribution project. As long as a Dominican owns a plot of land, even though it may only be a few *tareas*, he or she feels much more fortunate than someone who is landless. It will become apparent in Chapter Six just how detrimental the secondary effects of tourism growth in a region can be on host society land tenure patterns and on local agricultural practices and for this reason it is important to provide some basic information on landownership in the community of Luperón here.

In Dominican society "partible inheritance" is the norm, where upon the death of the parents, the land is equally distributed among all offspring, male and female, regardless of gender. Eric Wolf states that those societies that practice "partible inheritance," while giving claim to some land or its yield to every member of a new generation, also succeed in subdividing the land "so that each successor receives a combination of resources weaker than the one managed by the departing head" (1966:73). The result is the proliferation of many miniscule plots of land or *minifundia*. Familial squabbles

surrounding the distribution of the inheritance are commonplace in Luperón and I often heard stories of how fathers favored some offspring over others by giving away large portions of their land before they died to avoid having their lands being equally divided.

In the Dominican Republic there are no property taxes, nor is there a capital gains tax on real estate sales (World Bank 1985:14). This makes land an excellent investment in a nation where inflation can quickly decrease the value of one's monetary savings. It is no surprise that those Dominicans who can afford to do so buy land or invest their money in other forms of material wealth. During the course of my research I asked many *luperonenses* who I knew to be landless, or who only owned the small plot of land on which their house stood, what would be the first thing they would buy if they won the national lottery. Of the 42 individuals asked this question, 69 percent said they would like to buy a piece of property where they could build a large house and have a farm or raise livestock (29). Other responses to this question included: buy an automobile (4), open a store (4), open a small hotel (1), pay for a university education (1), buy a large fishing boat (1), move to the capitol and buy a house (1), and finally, one individual, whether joking or not, said he would spend the rest of his life drinking, womanizing, and playing dominos. Clearly, the majority of respondents still thought that the best investment and form of security was to purchase land.

In 1950, the census listed the *municipio* of Luperón as containing 6586 individuals whose occupations were listed as either farmers or ranchers and 3274 agricultural laborers (ONC 1950:393). If these figures are correct, in 1950 approximately 33 percent of the individuals involved in agricultural production in the *municipio* were landless laborers or sharecroppers. When I conducted my household survey in 1989 I found that just under 40 percent (39.7%) of the households surveyed were solely occupied by individuals who owned no land or only owned the land on which their houses stood (see Table 5). A partial explanation for this figure is that I limited my survey to the town of Luperón. For many rural poor the first step in a migration, which may eventually led

them to a large urban center, or perhaps even abroad (legally if possible or illegally), is to move into town where the cost of living is cheaper and where more opportunities to find day labor exist than in the isolated rural areas of the *municipio*. Only one of the landless households contained individuals who migrated from Puerto Plata to work at the new hotel, so I found that 37.9 percent of the households surveyed whose occupants lived in the community prior to the construction of the resort hotel were landless.

Table 5: Land Tenure in the Town of Luperón in 1989.

| <u>Size of land holdings</u> | <u>N</u> | <u>% of total N</u> | <u>Total land in tareas</u> | <u>% of total land</u> |
|------------------------------|----------|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Landless                     | 23       | 39.7                | N/A                         | N/A                    |
| 39 tareas or less            | 10       | 17.2                | 122                         | 1.0                    |
| 40 - 79 tareas               | 7        | 12.1                | 401                         | 4.0                    |
| 80 - 159                     | 5        | 8.6                 | 543                         | 6.0                    |
| 160 - 499 tareas             | 7        | 12.1                | 2055                        | 21.0                   |
| 500 or more tareas           | 6        | 10.3                | 6500                        | 68.0                   |
| Totals                       | 58       | 100.0               | 9621                        | 100.0                  |

Note: 15.89 *tareas* = 1 hectare.

The information gathered from my household survey indicate that land tenure in Luperón is severely polarized. Twenty-two percent of the households own more than 160 *tareas* (16 hectares) per household and in aggregate control almost 90 percent of the land (see Table 5). On the other hand, 69 percent of the household either own no land or have holdings of less than 80 *tareas* (five hectares). Twenty percent of those surveyed (7 households) who owned land held less than 15 *tareas* (1 hectare) and would qualify as belonging to the *minifundia* according to Clausner's classification. Of the ten households



which own less than 40 *tareas* of land (2.5 hectares), only three of the principal breadwinners claim farming as their primary or secondary economic occupation. Only one of these three individuals lives solely from farming and he augments the earnings he receives from his 30 *tareas* by sharecropping an additional 25 *tareas* from a larger landowner. One of the other individuals works primarily as a *gomero* (an individual who repairs tires - in this case motorcycle tires) and has a few banana and plantain trees. The other small farmer, who owns only 19 *tareas*, works as an agricultural laborer in addition to growing pigeon peas and plantains for the market.

Of the 122 *tareas* of land owned in aggregate by these small holders, only 9 *tareas* or 7.4 percent of the land was listed as being fallow. Fifteen *tareas*, or 12.3 percent, of this land was listed as land used exclusively for livestock. This land was all owned by one small holder who raised pigs and chickens. Ninety-three *tareas* or 76.2 percent of the land was devoted principally to the production of cash crops such as maize, peanuts, yucca and plantains or for the cultivation of *viveres* (food staples) for household consumption. One small holder who was a full-time employee at the Luperón Beach Resort hotel rented his four *tareas* (4.1 percent of the total) to a neighbor who raised pigs on the small plot of land.

On the other end of scale are the large landowners living in the community who were surveyed. Together, they were found to own 8555 *tareas* or almost 90 percent of the total land documented in survey. Even if this figure is biased, which I believe it to be in its conservatism, this shows that 22 percent of the individuals control nine-tenths of the land. Of the thirteen households which own more than 160 *tareas* of land, five of the head of households claimed farming to be their primary or secondary economic activity, four claimed ranching to be their primary or secondary economic activity, one claimed both farming and ranching as their primary activity, while three heads of household claimed neither farming or ranching to be their primary or secondary economic activities.

Of the three that did not claim farming or ranching to be their primary or secondary economic activities, all were households headed by females.

Even though the three female headed households did not claim that agricultural activities were their principal or secondary economic activities, the land they controlled provided a significant income for each household. In one of these households the principal occupation of the woman was that of a local school teacher. Furthermore, her husband lived in the United States (New York City) and regularly sent her remittances which she invested in property. She owned several buildings in the community which she rented as shops and one apartment. She also owned 340 *tareas* (21 hectares) of land which she rented as pasture for grazing to various ranchers in the community.

The principal occupations of the other two female headed households were listed as *comerciantes* (merchants, shop keepers). One woman was 65 years old, widowed, and childless. She rented land to four small farmers (135 *tareas*), one rancher (150 *tareas*), and had an additional 115 *tareas* of unused land. She also owned a small *colmado* in town which kept her occupied and provided additional income. The third female who owned more than 160 *tareas* was a divorcée. She had been previously married to the son of one of the largest landowners in the region and had six sons from this marriage. When she divorced she remained on good terms with her former father-in-law who gave her work in his business. She had managed to purchase 185 *tareas* of land over the years on which she grazed 25 cows jointly belonging to her and her former father-in-law.

All the other households who owned more than 160 *tareas* of land (10 households) and claimed ranching or farming as either their primary or secondary occupations were headed by males. However, seven of these individuals listed other activities as being their primary economic activity. Four were *comerciantes* (merchants) who owned several of the largest businesses in the town. One was a public administrator in the *municipio*. Another man owned several buildings which he rented, 425 *tareas* of land (of which he rented 300 *tareas*), but at 76 years of age was basically retired. Finally, one

individual claimed being a taxi driver was his primary activity. Only two of the largest landowners claimed farming as their primary economic activity and one said ranching was his primary economic activity. Nonetheless, in all these households the earnings from agricultural production were not insignificant.

Table 6: Distribution of Land Production for largest Luperón Landowners.

|       | <u>Total land owned</u> | <u>Total land in use by owner</u> | <u>Agricultural Crops</u> | <u>Livestock/ Grazing</u> | <u>Unused</u> | <u>Renting to others</u> |
|-------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| 1.    | 160                     | 160                               | 100                       | 60                        | ----          | ----                     |
| 2.    | 185                     | 150                               | ----                      | 150                       | 35            | ----                     |
| 3.    | 210                     | *250                              | 130                       | *120                      | ----          | ----                     |
| 4.    | 335                     | 335                               | 185                       | 150                       | ----          | ----                     |
| 5.    | 340                     | ----                              | ----                      | ----                      | 15            | 325                      |
| 6.    | 400                     | ----                              | ----                      | ----                      | 115           | 285                      |
| 7.    | 425                     | 300                               | ----                      | 300                       | 50            | 75                       |
| 8.    | 600                     | *900                              | ----                      | *900                      | ----          | ----                     |
| 9.    | 625                     | 560                               | 210                       | 350                       | 25            | 40                       |
| 10.   | 850                     | *1250                             | 300                       | *900                      | 50            | ----                     |
| 11.   | 1100                    | 850                               | ----                      | 800                       | 50            | 250                      |
| 12.   | 1450                    | 1250                              | 700                       | 500                       | 30            | 220                      |
| 13.   | 1875                    | 1675                              | 400                       | 1200                      | 75            | 200                      |
| Tot.: | 8555                    | *9295                             | 2025                      | *5430                     | 445           | 1395                     |

\*Note: Total number includes land being rented by landowner for grazing livestock (740 *tareas*).

In Table 6 the reader can review the data collected from the 22 percent of households claiming the largest land holdings and how these holdings were being utilized by each household. Approximately 24 percent (23.7%) of the land was used for agricultural crops of which maize was predominant (1100 *tareas* or 54% of total land under

cultivation), followed by sorghum which is being promoted by the Dominican government in the region (600 *tareas* or 30% of total land under cultivation), with the final 16 percent being planted in a variety of fruit and vegetable crops. Good crop land is largely planted in maize or sorghum; however, it was not uncommon to plant peanuts as an alternative crop to "rest" the soil and restore some of the nutrients the cereal crops had depleted. Some tobacco was also grown by the larger landowners, but in recent years this crop is being planted by fewer farmers in the *municipio* of Luperón according to the agronomists working in the region.

Fifty-five percent of all land owned by the largest landowners of Luperón is presently used for grazing and pasture. Cattle production is lucrative and considered to be less labor intensive than agriculture and the monetary returns are high. The total head of cattle quoted as being owned by those large landowners surveyed was 862. If this figure is true, then including the land being rented by these landowners, the ratio of cattle to land was one per 6.3 *tareas*. During the dry season 6.3 *tareas* of land would be unlikely to sustain one cow (this is another indication that the figures given to me by these respondents were artificially low). Besides raising cattle, four of the large landowners surveyed also said they raised pigs. Two others raised goats and one had a large chicken ranch which produced both poultry and eggs for the market.

According to Table 6, the large landowners living in Luperón also rented a significant portion of their land. Sixteen percent of their holdings were being rented for either grazing land or for crops. Many of the small producers in the region rented additional land from these large landowners either paying a set rate per crop/season (unusual) or by sharecropping, whereby a percentage of the price received for the crop from the buyer was handed over to the landowner. As in other parts of the Dominican Republic, the percentage of the crop given to the owner as payment for using the land varies according to land quality and potential yields (Antonini, Ewel, and Tupper 1975:45). Another factor influencing the portion given to the landowner is whether the tenant obtained any



seed, fertilizer, pesticides, or land preparation help from this individual. Typically, *luperonense* sharecroppers expect to give one-third to one-half of their harvest to the landowner. One landless sharecropper gave 60 percent of his crop to the landowner, but this was unusual. The landowner supplied the seed, fertilizer, pesticides, and a team of oxen to plow the field where the maize was sown. The landowner was a *compadre*, and childhood friend of the poor sharecropper, who was given a rich plot of land to plant. The yield from the field was sufficiently high that all the work the sharecropper put into the crop was easily compensated by the cash he earned from selling 40 percent of the maize.

Little land is left unused in Luperón. Table No. 6 shows that only 445 *tareas* or 5 percent of the total land controlled by the large landowners was listed as being unused. Most of the land included in this figure is land either in the hills where the land is too steep for grazing and/or agriculture or next to the coast where salt spray makes it undesirable for either crops or grazing.

Land tenure patterns in Luperón are similar to those found elsewhere in the Dominican Republic. Control of most of the land is in the hands of only a few families, while over 55 percent of those households surveyed either own no land or have a plot too small to provide an adequate livelihood for the owner. The largest landowners favor the production of cereal crops or cattle for the national and export markets. The smaller farmers concentrate in the production of crops which supply the regional and national markets with food most Dominican consumers purchase on a daily basis. The local small farmers do meet some of their subsistence needs; however, none meet all their subsistence needs through farming, nor do they manufacture most of the tools needed for agricultural production. Each small producer plants at least one cash crop in order to purchase those items needed to maintain the household which he or she cannot produce locally. In this way every *luperonense* is somehow linked to the national economy.

### Agricultural Practices

In the previous section a discussion concerning *luperonense* land tenure and agricultural practices in the *municipio* was initiated. In this section more about local agricultural practices and marketing patterns will be briefly outlined. The types of crops grown, or animals raised, in the region is largely determined by the amount of land owned, soil fertility, available capital, and existing knowledge of market prices, but individual preferences and local traditions are also responsible in making a choice of what will be sown or what animals are to be stocked. All these factors are carefully reviewed by an individual involved in an agricultural enterprise.

The *municipio* has a long agricultural tradition of being a major maize, tobacco, and cattle raising region. Maize and cattle are still the dominant agricultural products from the region, but the importance of tobacco has been waning. Tobacco has been the traditional crop of the small farmer in the region for decades, but now more small farmers are seeking alternatives to raising tobacco. Local agronomists told me that while tobacco output is still quite high, the quality of local tobacco cannot compete with the tobacco of the Cibao, and the high costs of labor and pesticides have driven many small farmers to give up tobacco in favor of such crops as peanuts, sweet manioc, plantains, and red beans. A few of the richer agriculturalists have forsaken farming altogether in favor of raising cattle which have a high profit margin.

The government agronomists working at the Luperón agricultural station in 1989 generally had a low opinion of the average farmer in the region. Several told me that the typical farmer is steeped in tradition, conservative, and not willing to try anything new, even if it means increased productivity and higher returns. One agronomist went so far as to tell me that he thought the average farmer was lazy. He said, "Look, they plant maize once a year in October and harvest it in late March. The rest of the time they spend lying around drinking and cockfighting. We show them how to grow another crop in the

same fields such as peanuts during the summer months which will improve the soil and give them more money, but do they want to do it? No! They say it is too expensive, or too much work, or there isn't enough rain in the summer. Meanwhile, they are always in debt and their children don't get enough to eat."

In fairness to the local farmers it is wise to be conservative in a region where annual rainfall can be highly unpredictable. While the winter rains always come from November to January, the summer can be very dry. In 1991, there was no rain from May until late September. Crops withered and cattle died from lack of water and adequate grazing. By their conservative ways the farmers reduce risk and avoid financial disaster. Most of the poorer farmers cannot afford to experiment with new ideas because they have no financial cushion in case of failure. Nor, as mentioned previously in this chapter, does the national government provide economic aid to the small farmer which might allow him to experiment with new crops or production methods.

One of the more successful crops newly introduced into the region has been sorghum. Introduced into the region in 1987, sorghum is now being grown by several of the larger landowners in the region. Grown in the drier parts of the *sabana* zone sorghum is more drought resistant than maize and its cultivation is supported by government legislature. But it is only the rich farmers who have adopted sorghum. They can afford to experiment with new crops and they qualify for agricultural loans and subsidies given by the government. However, even the rich farmers have not chosen to replace maize cultivation with sorghum on all their land.

The planting of maize follows a strict annual cycle. Before the first rains come at the end of October or the beginning of November, the land is plowed. This field preparation may start as early as the beginning of August and the fields are allowed to absorb moisture for at least several weeks prior to planting. Even the largest landowners in the region do not own their own tractors. Ox drawn plows are still used by many large and middle size farmers, or they pay for a government tractor from the agricultural station to

till their fields at a set rate. The fields are sown in October or early November just when the first rains begin to fall. Pesticides and weeding are done at regular frequencies throughout the growing cycle. One farmer told me that normally two applications of pesticides is sufficient, but in years when crops are particularly ravaged with insects more may be applied if the farmer can afford to do so.

Beginning at the end of February maize is available in the *municipio*. Local residents enjoy eating green maize roasted over a fire, but most corn is left on the stalks to dry. By the end of March or the beginning of April it is time to harvest the corn. Women, older children, and men all participate in this activity. A small knife with a curved blade is used to cut the dry ears of maize from the stalks. In 1989, the rate paid for this labor was U.S. \$1.12 per one hundred lbs., referred to as a *quintal*. The dried ears are put in large *quintal* bags and carried to collection sites near the road. A hard worker could earn between U.S. \$4.78–\$6.37 a day during the height of the maize harvest season and many local day laborers found at least one month's employment cutting the maize and loading it onto trucks for transportation. In addition to the wages workers earned, landowners expect the them to pilfer some of the crop; this is acceptable as long as not too much maize is pocketed. The pilfered maize is often sold to owners of local *colmados* at the going rate in 1989 of U.S. \$0.08 per pound.

The maize harvesting season is also the only time during the year when large numbers of Haitians are found within the borders of the *municipio*. Workers are in demand at this time and there is enough work for all comers. Several Haitian laborers told me they prefer harvesting maize than working in the sugar fields of the sugar factory in the adjacent *municipio* because the wages are much better than those paid to the cane cutters. Most Haitians can only earn between U.S. \$2.39–\$3.18 per day before expenses cutting sugar, the conditions in the sugar fields are hard and dangerous, and several Haitians told me that the Dominicans overseeing the sugar operation swindle the Haitian workers at every opportunity. Cutting maize is less dangerous and more financially rewarding, but



Haitians run the risk of national police and military rounding them up and shipping them back to the sugar plantation. This did not happen in Luperón in 1989, but it has happened in previous years according to both Haitian and Dominican informants. Since the sugar harvest, or *zafra*, and the maize harvest do not overlap, rather the maize harvest precedes the *zafra*, many Haitians who reside in the region more or less permanently, try to work both harvests.

Table 7 is list of crops grown in the region of Luperón. Most are not important commercially; however, all are eaten or used by the local inhabitants. The most important economic crops listed in Table 7 are maize, sorghum, tobacco, peanuts, plantains, red beans, pigeon peas, limes, and sweet manioc (*yuca*). These are the local crops which are transported to the central markets in Santiago de los Caballeros by middlemen called *camioneros* or are sold to agents of INESPREE (Instituto de Establización de Precios). INESPREE purchases most of the maize, sorghum, and peanuts grown in the region. To a lesser extent INESPREE also purchases some of the plantains, red beans, and pigeon peas grown in Luperón.

Table 7: Agricultural Crops Grown in Luperón.

|                   |                     |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Almonds           | Lime                |
| Aloe              | Maize               |
| Annatto Seed      | Mango               |
| Avocado           | Ñame                |
| Banana            | Onions              |
| Beets             | Peanuts             |
| Bell Pepper       | Pigeon Peas         |
| Bitter Manioc     | Pineapple           |
| Bitter Orange     | Plantains           |
| Broad Bean (Lima) | Red Beans           |
| Cabbage           | Sorghum             |
| Cashew            | Sugarcane           |
| Coconut           | Sweet Manioc (Yuca) |
| Cucumber          | Sweet Orange        |
| Custard Apple     | Tamarind            |
| Eggplant          | Tobacco             |
| Garlic            | Tomato              |
| Grapefruit        | Yautía              |
| Guava             |                     |

The crops produced in Luperón for the internal national marketing centers of Santiago and Santo Domingo are rarely transported to these markets by local farmers. Buyers working for various middlemen called *buscones*, or the *camioneros* (middlemen) themselves, make arrangements to purchase a crop from a particular farmer prior to the harvest. Often money is paid to the farmer as loan against the future crop in order to ensure that the farmer will be obligated to sell all his crop to the middleman. When the crop is harvested large trucks owned or rented by these middlemen travel throughout Luperón loading the produce purchased from each farmer. Final payment is made and these middlemen then transport the crop to the central markets and sell them to wholesalers, often at a significant profit.

One can see these intermediaries traveling through the *municipio* at times of year when local crops are harvested. In February limes are harvested to be sold to the *camioneros*. Maize is sold at the end of March and during April. Red beans and pigeon peas are also usually sold at the end of April and in early May. The more drought resistant crops like peanuts and eggplant are sold during late July, August, and early September. Plantains are sold throughout the year, but the best plantains, according to several farmers interviewed, ripen in the late winter and early spring.

The Dominican peasant is market oriented and, while only one or two of his crops are produced for the national internal or export market, most of the crops listed in Table 7 find their way into local markets. Road-side stands in Luperón sold mangos, avocados, eggplant, peanuts, various root crops, and citrus when they were in season. Local *colmados* bought crops from local producers or sold the produce that the owner grew in his or her *conuco*. Two vegetable shops in the town of Luperón whenever possible purchased their onions, root crops, tomatos, cabbage, beets, bell peppers, and garlic, from local producers because they were significantly cheaper than vegetables trucked in from other areas.

Consumer prices in 1989 reflected the rampant national inflation. Because the price of gasoline was raised from U.S. \$0.40 a gallon in January 1989 to U.S. \$0.96 a gallon at the end of June, and the fact that most goods in the Dominican Republic rely on trucks for transportation, this gasoline price increase was passed on to the consumer by an increase in most items sold. An example of this inflation is reflected in the price of the national staple, rice. Rice had cost U.S. \$0.14 a pound in Luperón for a high quality variety during January 1989; by the end of the year in December it cost U.S. \$0.36 a pound. Inflation ate up local incomes because local wages did not increase at even half the rate of inflation, and many poor local inhabitants were forced to cut back in purchasing food luxuries such as meat. Chicken, which had been sold for U.S. \$0.64 a pound in the beginning of the year was being sold at U.S. \$1.27 a pound in December 1989. The price of public transportation on the *guagua* from Luperón to Imbert was raised from U.S. \$0.48 to U.S. \$0.78 one way. Consumer goods such as clothes, cigarettes, alcoholic beverages, kerosene, cooking oils, and manufactured construction materials were similarly affected.

Livestock production is another important regional industry. Cattle, pigs, chickens, and to a lesser degree, goats and sheep, are raised in the *municipio* of Luperón. Production ranges from the large landowner who may own several hundred head of cattle to the small farmer who owns one or two pigs. Cattle are important for both milk production, meat, and hides. Cows are milked daily and the milk is transported to the numerous small cheese factories which dot the *municipio*. Cows are rarely slaughtered because of their value as milk producers and breeding animals, and only old or injured cows are sold for their meat. Young steers are usually sold after one year to be slaughtered for their meat and hides.

In 1989, depending on the age, weight, and sex, a young heifer could be purchased for approximately U.S. \$190.00, while a piglet cost approximately U.S. \$48.00. Most small farmers who owned cattle had less than five head unless they had an agreement

with a larger landowner allowing to graze their cattle on the other person's property for a share of the profit. On the other hand, pigs need little room, are fed table scraps or whey purchased at the rate of U.S. \$0.12 a gallon from cheese factories, and are considered a good investment by many small farmers. In 1989, an adult pig could bring as much U.S. \$223.00 from the butcher if it was particularly large. Many townspeople in Luperón own one or two pigs, which lived in the back of their homes, and are considered investments. Local inhabitants referred to these live pigs as their *alcancías* or piggy banks. If emergency money is needed the pig is sold; otherwise it makes a particularly good feast at Christmas.

### The Merchants of Luperón

Mentioned previously was that the town of Luperón plays an important role as a service center to the surrounding agricultural population. Those wishing to avoid long journeys to urban centers come to the town to purchase and sell goods, receive health care, obtain required governmental documents, have their spiritual needs administered to, and find a wider spectrum of entertainment than available in the rural areas of the *municipio*. This provides many economic opportunities for the townspeople and employs a significant portion of the town's inhabitants.

The only manufacturing industries in the community, aside from a few cottage industries, are the cheese factory and the small cinder block factory. Both of these industries employ only a few individuals. The cheese factory is open everyday, but its production is limited to less than one hundred edam-like cheeses per day. The factory only employs five workers full-time besides the owner as is a simple affair. The cheese factory is also the only source of fresh milk in the town and it makes extra money selling milk to local families with children. The cinder block factory is an open air affair with molds to make concrete bricks used in the construction of local houses and buildings.



Again, daily output ranges from 50 to 500 blocks per day, depending on local demand, and this "factory" never employs more than four individuals whose work schedules are highly sporadic. At U.S. \$0.38 a cinder block this factory only grosses U.S. \$191.00 on its best days.

While little manufacturing is done in Luperón, it is a retail hub for the *municipio*. However, poor accounting skills, problems with cash flow, and misreading consumer demand result in a fairly high turnover in community businesses. Poor infrastructural development also accounted for at least one potentially successful business to close its doors in 1989.

The son of a wealthy local merchant had an idea that an ice cream parlor would be successful in the town of Luperón. He organized the business, selected a building on Avenida Duarte, and made arrangements to purchase ice cream in Santiago and transport it to Luperón. The shop was an immediate success. Two employees were hired and, more often than not, the ice cream on hand was not sufficient to meet demand. After two months of successful sales, the problem of keeping the electricity supply constant in his shop began to cause problems for the owner. In Imbert a transformer, which helped supply electricity to the town of Luperón, had blown up in the first week of August causing periods of several days when the town had no electricity. The owner of the ice cream parlor relied on electricity to keep his freezers running. He also had a back-up generator, because public electricity was highly unreliable at the best of times, but his back-up generator failed as well and he lost a complete shipment of ice cream due to spoilage. After two months of being open the shop closed for the rest of 1989. In a postscript to this story, the young entrepreneur was again the proprietor of a thriving ice cream business in 1992. When asked how he avoided product losses he said that he had purchased an old kerosene freezer in the beginning of 1991 which had yet to fail. With two back-up systems he avoided losses, the shop thrived, and the *luperonenses* could indulge their passion for ice cream.

Businesses in Luperón supply a wide array of services. Local businesses can be divided into three categories: (1) retailers; (2) craftsmen or artisans; and, (3) those supplying recreation to local inhabitants. Mentioned previously was the fact that there is quite a bit of turnover in businesses established in Luperón. Small variety stores called *colmados* or *pulperías* appear to be the businesses most susceptible to failure in Luperón. These are small stores which typically will sell candies, cigarettes, bread, alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, simple medicines such as aspirin, some *víveres*, charcoal, matches, cooking oil, margarine, tomato paste, and a variety of other items. In these stores purchases can be made in small quantities. Buying one cigarette, an aspirin, a box of matches, or one plantain is typical. Credit is often extended to local residents at varying interest rates, with twenty percent per month being common.

In February 1989, there were 38 *colmados* in the town of Luperón. At the end of October of the same year there were only 33 *colmados* in the town. Several of the *colmados* which closed in 1989 were reopened in 1992, while others had shut their doors permanently. This fluctuation is often the result of cash flow problems caused by extending too much credit. While waiting for clients to repay their bills, new orders cannot be purchased. To avoid this problem several of the larger stores in town had signs saying that no credit was available. Local residents often complained that store owners who extended no credit were "*muy tacaño*" or cheap, but local residents relying on credit also paid huge annual interest rates to the storekeepers.

In 1989, Luperón retail businesses included the following: 6 large combination food/dry goods stores; the 33 *colmados* already mentioned; one hardware store (Marco's); a book and school supplies store; a store selling ceramics; three clothing stores; three tailor shops; a pharmacy; a dentist office; a private medical clinic; a funeral supply shop; three butcher shops each specializing in either beef, pork, or chicken; three car and motorcycle supply shops (repairs also done); two photography studios; two furniture stores; three vegetable shops; three cosmetics shops (two of which also sold

children's toys); two shoe stores; three fish stores; and, finally, three pawn shops (one was also a fish store owned by a local middleman specializing in marine products).

Service shops included the following: three motorcycle repair shops; one automotive repair shop which also worked on trucks, tractors, and boat motors; one shop specializing in repairing all types of gasoline and diesel engines; an electronics repair shop; three car washes; seven barber shops and hair salons; two welding shops; and finally, three small hotels whose main clients were Dominicans with the occasional foreign tourist also staying at these establishments.

The town also has a language school called the John F. Kennedy School of Languages. This is a chain of schools throughout the Dominican Republic specializing in foreign language instruction. In Luperón many of the inhabitants take English classes so that they could later find work in the tourist industry. Another tourist-oriented business is called the *Instituto Técnico Hotelero Ramírez*. This business, established in June of 1989, is a training school teaching individuals to be waiter/waitresses, bell hops, and hotel maids. Graduates are given a certification which helps procure work at resorts in the Puerto Plata–North Coast Tourist Zone.

Those businesses specializing in meeting the recreational needs of the local inhabitants are numerous. The cockfighting ring is only open on Friday afternoons when the matches are held. Food vendors, prostitutes, and professional gamblers always gather at the ring on Fridays to drink, gamble, and visit with friends. This is a male dominated activity with the only females being present being either food vendors or prostitutes. The police also are always present to make sure the crowd does not get too unruly. There are three pool halls in Luperón where young men congregate in the evenings and on Sundays. The Video Domingo provides weekend videos to local audiences. Popular films include karate/kung fu movies, Mexican comedies, and the occasional x-rated movie. Soon the Video Domingo will be in competition with the new cinema being constructed in the town.

*Cafeterías* are numerous in the town. These businesses range from those that provided complete meals to those that provided only fruit juices and sandwiches. Many establishments calling themselves *cafeterías* are little more than bars where local inhabitants go to drink, dance, and fraternize with the local prostitutes. Generally, most inhabitants call these *cafeterías* favored by the prostitutes *cabarets* to distinguish them from those providing food and drink. There were three "fancy" restaurants in Luperón in 1989 where a wealthier *luperonense* might take friends and family to eat. However, the main clientele of these restaurants are tourists.

Other important sources of recreation are the discotheques. There are three discotheques in the community and they are particularly active on Sunday evenings. Admission fees ranging from U.S. \$0.48 – \$0.78 per person are normal, but higher prices are charged when live entertainers come to play at these clubs. With merengues and salsas blasting so that individuals have to shout to be heard, the dance floors are full of *luperonenses* until one or two in the morning.

Another type of merchant found in Luperón are the street vendors. Local boys control the shoe shine trade and congregate at the *parquecito* where the *guaguas* are boarded for Imbert. In 1989, for U.S. \$0.32 they would shine a pair of black or brown shoes, but they would charge one or two pesos more for shoes of any other color or if the shoes were covered with dried mud. During the day vendors selling candies and fruits walk up and down the streets shouting out what they have for sale. On several street corners are small stalls where old women sell coffee, fried plantains, chicken, and *yuca*. One man sells whole barbecued chickens to those who can afford this tasty luxury and another man sells freshly made corn *arepas*, fried in hot oil, to *luperonenses* every morning on the corner of Avenida Morrobel and 27 de Febrero. In the evening, stalls are set up by other individuals who sell fried chicken, beef, or fish, plantains, *yuca*, or *ñame*. Providing local individuals with relatively inexpensive and tasty snacks, these food stalls are usually open from five or six in the afternoon until ten or eleven o'clock at night.



Finally, one last type of merchant found in Luperón are those household vendors who sell one or two items from their homes. These individuals usually have other occupations and selling these items helps to supplement the household income in a minor way. The sign on one house advertises that its occupant sells life insurance. Another man specializes in selling watches. He is a salesman who travels throughout the *municipio* selling watches and repairing them during the day; in the evenings he is already willing to repair or sell another watch while relaxing in his home. Four houses sold charcoal and firewood in 1989 and three others sold ice. One house sold only cold beer and another advertised that shoes were cleaned there. Two other houses had signs saying that they rented rooms.

One old lady had a small cottage industry in 1989 weaving hats out of palm fronds. These lovely hats were hung in her front yard from tree branches making a beautiful display waving in the breeze. The hats were sold predominantly to tourists who could afford the U.S. \$12.75 she charged per hat. Male *luperonenses* preferred wearing baseball caps, especially those with Toronto Blue Jays and New York Yankees insignia on them. Palm hats were considered by many townspeople as symbolic of being a *campesino* or field hand and refused to wear them. Still, the specialized craft of weaving palm hats provided one old woman with a livelihood and added to the character of the town according to many of the tourists who found the "hat tree" enchanting. Unfortunately, this old woman died in 1990 and no one weaves these palm hats in the community anymore.

### Conclusion

In this chapter a brief description of the structure of the community and traditional lifeways was presented. This chapter was written as a synchronic description of community life. It was written in this way primarily to introduce the reader to the

traditional lifeways of the people of Luperón as observed in 1989. The town of Luperón is both a community which is undergoing technical development and one whose inhabitants' lifeways are strongly influenced by behavioral patterns well rooted in tradition. Modernization is not simply a task of introducing new technology, it also involves a cognitive transformation of local perspectives on education, political systems, religious beliefs, and gender roles. Some inhabitants of the community have attitudes that are changing. To them education for both males and females is considered desirable. They view professional training as a way to a better life. Other townspeople's lives are still carefully dictated by traditional views or they are too poor to break out of the trap poverty has forced them into and are not able to take advantage of any of the opportunities elite controlled development has brought to the region.

The community of Luperón is not a cultural isolate. The long overview of Luperón's history covered in Appendix B illustrates that Luperón has rarely been isolated from national and international events since it was colonized; rather, the economic relationship the community has with outsiders, particularly the national elite, is responsible for the existing social, political, and economic systems within the community. Luperón's inhabitants have long been involved in primary sector economic activities providing valuable products for national and international markets. However, throughout history the relationship between the producer (*luperonense*) and the buyer (*camionero, buscón, corredor*) has been an unequal one which gives the buyer the upper hand in most economic transactions. The relative powerlessness of the producer has allowed him to be exploited. It is the intermediary and the wholesaler who reaps the greatest rewards from the labor of the *luperonense*.

When tourism was introduced into the community of Luperón it was planted into the existing social milieu with little thought to how it would affect the local inhabitants. It was believed that local inhabitants would benefit from the "tickle down" effect of tourism. Few local inhabitants, besides several members of the local elite who directly

benefited from the construction project, were informed about the plans to build a tourist resort in their backyards when the initial blueprints of the resort were being drawn and, even if they had been, few *luperonenses* other than those already involved had the political connections or financial clout to make any impact on the decision-making process.

Government planners say that the advantages of tourism far outweigh any disadvantages it brings and the new employment opportunities that the international enclave resort and the concomitant growth of secondary tourist industries to meet local tourist needs will provide economic benefits for a large number of *luperonenses*. Plans and reality are often quite different. Chapter Five will examine how one traditional local industry, fishing, which one would surmise to be sensitive to the introduction of tourism, has responded to the presence of this newly introduced industry, while Chapter Six will examine how other members of Luperón have reacted to the introduction of tourism. Both chapters will demonstrate the dynamics of community change in relation to the presence of a new economic and social phenomenon, tourism.

CHAPTER FIVE  
THE FISHING CULTURE OF LUPERÓN:  
TECHNOLOGY, TOURISM, AND CHANGE

A Cold Night's Work

There was a chilling breeze coming out of the northeast bringing a light shower of cold rain at a horizontal angle onto the two figures standing in the small boat. The older man, Ramon, was cursing the rain, the wind, and his bad luck; the young boy, Fafe, was silently wishing he was back on shore out of the wind and in dry clothes. It was the 7th of January and both Ramon and Fafe had not been fishing since before the start of the Christmas holidays. The festivities, problems with the small 7 h.p. outboard motor, and the need to reseal the boat's hull, had kept them from going fishing.

Not that it seemed to matter. Tonight's luck had been nothing but bad. Three times already they had played out their *chinchorro* in various parts of the Bahía de Gracias hoping to encircle a school of the bay's numerous fish, and three times the fish had eluded them. However, this time was different. The net felt heavy and as the end of the net came closer whatever was trapped began to thrash loudly. With a sudden surge of energy, the net was torn from Fafe's cold hands. Grabbing the net quickly, Fafe renewed his hold only to find that the net was no longer vibrating with the energy of a large trapped fish. Together, Fafe and Ramon hauled in the last *brazas* of net. There, in the net where the *copa* (seine purse) should have been, was a gaping hole. Ramon



exclaimed loudly, "*Coño, fue un pequeño tiburón*" (Damn, it was a small shark).

There would be no more fishing tonight and no money for four hours of cold work. The net would have to be mended and Don Pedro had told Ramon when he had given him U.S. \$32.00 to fix the motor that no more money would be forthcoming until he had repaid what he owed. Ramon hoped the one spool of #2 nylon line, which was all he had left in his house, would be sufficient to fix the hole. If not, perhaps Cecilia, his sister, might lend him the money to buy another spool. With these thoughts running through his mind, Ramon gunned his engine and turned the bow of his *yola* towards the glimmering lights of Luperón's dock which could barely be seen through the increasingly heavy down pouring of rain.

### The Littoral and Marine Resources of Luperón

#### Introduction

This section of Chapter Five is devoted to an examination of the marine environment whose resources are utilized by *luperonenses* living in the littoral zone of the *municipio* and by those local individuals who specialize making a living from the sea. The exploitation of marine resources provide some *luperonenses* with an alternative adaptive strategy to the predominantly agrarian focus of the majority of inhabitants. Only a few individuals in the region are completely reliant on a maritime adaptive strategy; however, many other individuals utilize the available coastal resources to make ends meet in times of economic hardship, or utilize these resources as part of the complex adaptive strategy described in Chapter One called occupational multiplicity.

The littoral and marine resources provide an additional set of foodstuffs for local exploitation which many inhabitants freely utilize. Rural laborers may collect shellfish or dive for lobster during the season when agricultural work is hard to obtain.

Professional offshore fishermen may supplement their income by raising pigs or constructing *cana* roofs when conditions at sea are unfavorable for fishing. A skilled fisherman may also have a little land and raise crops to help make ends meet. Is this individual an agriculturalist or fisherman? Occupational multiplicity is an economic strategy being utilized by many *luperonense* households.

A detailed ethnographic discussion of Luperón's fisher folk will follow later in this chapter. However, it is important to understand the wide range of variation that *luperonenses* encounter in their marine environment. Luperón has an extensive coastline. The marine environment is divided into several distinct zones of exploitation. Each zone requires different technology, knowledge, and capital investment in order to harvest its resources. These zones can be divided into the following categories: the littoral zone; the inshore fishery (this includes bays, lagoons, coral reefs adjacent to the mainland, the outer reef and the deep water immediately beyond the outer reef); and finally, the offshore banks located many kilometers to the north and northeast of the mainland.

### The Tropical Fisheries of the Caribbean Region

Fishing and fisher folk are found in all geographical areas of the world where waters are rich in marine life. Fishing as a subsistence strategy has a long history. It certainly was certainly in existence prior to the Neolithic, and there is evidence that fishing predates the existence of Homo sapiens. Faunal remains collected from the Homo erectus site of Terra Amata, France, suggests that at least as early as 400,000 B.P. humans were taking advantage of marine resources gathered easily along the littoral fringe of the seas (Campbell 1982:285).

Fishing has often been considered as a variation within the rubric of the subsistence strategy called hunting-gathering. Fisher folk could be found historically within

societies functioning at all levels of social integration; bands, tribes, chieftains, and nation-states. Fisher folk in today's world have been categorized as members of tribal groups, as peasants, as rural proletariat, and as examples of the entrepreneurial class in developed nation-states.

Fishing poses similar problems for people the world over that are quite different from those encountered by individuals practicing terrestrial adaptive strategies. The sea is an alien and often hostile environment for humans. Unlike terrestrial hunter-gatherers, fisher folk must locate prey while operating on a surface which is flat, undifferentiated, and provides few easily recognizable landmarks for reference purposes. This presents unique problems for fisher folk when learning about prey species and how to best capture them.

The Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, which surround the island of Hispaniola, like most tropical seas, are not considered to be highly productive maritime zones. Lower levels of nutrient salts, which are necessary for the production of phytoplanktons, the lowest rung of the marine food chain, make Caribbean waters less productive than those of the more temperate seas (Whiteleather and Brown 1945:12). The Caribbean region does not, however, as some individuals have claimed, suffer from a "dearth of fish" (Knight 1978:13). While overall marine productivity is low, there are productive zones in these waters which yield substantial biomass of marine species.

The tropical seas of the Caribbean region can be divided into two major ecological zones. The neritic zone is the region above the continental shelf. Beyond the continental shelf-continental slope break is the pelagic zone (Levinton 1982:163). Each zone has its own unique characteristics with species adapted specially to the specific environment where they are found. Temperate seas are blessed with rich resources in both the neritic and pelagic zones. Tropical seas provide limited nutrients in the pelagic zones and a smaller biomass of marine species are found in these waters. Seasonal

variations do occur, and schools of pelagic fish often migrate through these tropical waters at specific times of the year, but the waters around the island of Hispaniola provide the richest harvest for fisher folk from the neritic zone.

Marine resources can be best described as common property resources. Private property such as land can be controlled and protected by its owner. It is the owner alone who then obtains direct benefits from any investment. This is rarely true in a marine environment (Acheson 1981:277). The sea, as a common property resource, is open to all those individuals who have the requisite skills, technology, and capital to exploit this environment. Theoretically, this can lead to abuses. Overexploitation and habitat destruction are very real dangers in fragile marine environments.

In actuality, most fishing cultures in the world seek to regulate access to marine resources through mechanisms of exclusion. Investigations have shown that while marine species are rarely controllable, access to fishing territories can be, and access regulation helps to reduce uncertainty among fisher folk ( Ellis 1986:118-122; McCay 1978:399). In part, access is controlled by the technological specialization required for the pursuit of a particular marine species. For instance, the technology required to harvest grouper is wholly incompatible for the harvesting of conch. Among the fisher folk of Luperón, the amount of capital investment necessary for various types of fishing technology is the main determinant of what marine zone a particular individual will exploit.

The species harvested by the people of Luperón are many. The same fish may be called by several different names and this led to some confusion during the initial stages of my research. For example, the term *pargo* was used to refer to red snapper (*Lutjanus campechanus*) caught in the deep waters off the coast. The terms *colorado* and *colorao* were also sometimes used to describe this fish. To complicate matters even further, these same names were used to describe the squirrelfish (*Holocentrus ascensionis*). Caught in the same area and in the same manner (hook and line), but at



different depths, and commanding similar market prices, the local fishermen felt no need to differentiate between these species. However, taxonomically they are quite distinct species.

The term *mero* evoked the same confusion on the part of the researcher. Golden-striped bass, Nassau grouper, giant sea bass, and hinds, are all referred to by the term *mero*. This is a common problem other marine researchers have encountered in the Dominican Republic (c.f. Bonnelly de Calventi 1975:12). Official government statistics listing species harvested by Dominican fisheries also reflect this confusion between the taxonomic and common names. Multiple listings for the same, or closely related, species are found being listed independently of one another in these documents (c.f. ONE 1981).

#### The Littoral Zone of Luperón

The littoral zone of the *municipio* is a relatively narrow expanse of territory where the land and sea interface. Also called the intertidal zone, this is the home for species of fauna and flora especially adapted for living in this harsh transitional environment (Boaden and Seed 1985:1). The littoral zone in the Dominican Republic is legally protected by law. The Dominican government retains exclusive control of the first sixty meters of land starting from the low water line. While the law was not passed specifically to benefit the Dominican people, indirectly it serves to keep this intertidal zone public domain. In theory, while private companies or individuals may use this land, and create beaches, build docks, or jetties, public access to the littoral regions through private properties must be available and no stretch of coastal beach can be legally zoned off-limits to the public. This allows access to a rich environmental zone which some *luperonenses* exploit extensively.

The tidal variation of the north coast of the Dominican Republic has a mean range of 90 cm. and is semidiurnal (Hartshorn *et al.* 1981:59). This means that twice a day there is a slight tidal variation allowing *luperonenses* increased access to some rich marine resources at low tide. The littoral zone should actually be further divided into three distinct sub-areas; the littoral fringe, the eulittoral, and the sublittoral (Boaden and Seed 1985:41).

The littoral fringe is the area between land and sea which is sprayed by salt water, but not actually covered by the sea except during peak tides. A few plants and animals useful to the *luperonenses* can be found living in this area. Coconut palms (*Cocos nucifera*), joint firs or *uva de mar* (*Coccoloba uvifera*), the star apple tree (*Hippomane mancinello*), and furthest from the water, at the very edge of the littoral fringe, the almond tree can be found growing in this sub-zone. In season, the fruits of these trees are harvested by *luperonenses* for both commercial and subsistence needs. Land crabs also favor this area. Children playing on the beach often pass the time digging out land crab burrows hoping that the occupants are at home. If lucky, the child will be rewarded with the makings of a delicious meal.

The eulittoral zone provides another important resource area. This is the tidal zone which is covered with water and exposed twice daily. The black mangrove trees (*Avicennia* sp.) are found in this zone. They provide an important habitat which shelters many of the juvenile coral-associated fish species which are the central focus of the Dominican fisheries (Hartshorn *et al.* 1981:59). Growing on the trunks of these mangrove trees can be found the mangrove oyster (*Crassostrea rhizophorae*). In the Bahía de Gracias, and in the eastern lagoon near the beach of Cambiaso, the trunks of the mangrove trees are covered by these small, but delicious, oysters. They are not harvested commercially because of their diminutive size, but they are eaten by local inhabitants. One man told me he considered them "hard-luck" food. When there was no money, and other wild foods were difficult to gather, he and his family would

harvest them for home consumption. While prohibited by law, the mangrove trees are occasionally felled for lumber and to make charcoal.

The sublittoral zone is extensively utilized by Luperón's inhabitants who live near the coast. In subtropical waters, like those off the coast of Luperón, it is in the sublittoral zone where many types of corals and sea grass (also called turtle grass) can be found. One of the most popular food species found in this zone is called *burgao* (*Cittarium pica*). This mollusc is a small shellfish found attached to rocks below the tide line. In 1975, Dominican marine biologists believed it had market potential, and was not yet sufficiently exploited commercially (Bonnelly de Calventi 1975:14).

Today, *burgao* can be found on the menus of all the restaurants in Luperón. It is a dish favored by many urban dwelling Dominicans visiting the region. Local women and children harvest *burgao* along the rocky shores of the *municipio* by collecting the shellfish, which range in length from 3-10 cm., in large plastic buckets or woven sacks. They are frequently sold to middlemen who transport them to markets in Puerto Plata, or they are sold directly to local restaurants. While *burgao* is sold in restaurants at the same price as conch, octopus, or fish, it provides many poorer inhabitants of the coastal zone of Luperón with a cheap and plentiful source of marine protein.

The littoral zone requires little by way of special skills or equipment in order to exploit its resources. However, the quest for marine resources in the deeper coastal waters of Luperón requires both. Fishing in these deeper waters is the exclusive domain of men. There were several poor women living in the town of Luperón and the village of Cambiaso who fished along the coast or from Luperón's pier. However, during all of 1989, I never saw a woman go fishing from a boat, nor did I ever see a woman on a fishing boat as a passenger.

### The Inshore Fishery

The inshore marine environment is the zone most heavily exploited by the fisher folk of Luperón. Directly off the shores of Luperón can be found an expanse of coral reefs which support a variety of marine species. In the protected bays of the *municipio* turtle grass beds provide food and shelter for important species such as the queen conch (*Strombus gigas*), the helmet conch (*Cassis* sp.), and, hiding in coral crevices or in holes among the grass beds, the spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*). Among the roots of mangroves found in the deeper water are juvenile fish seeking protection from their many predators. In turn, these areas are prime hunting grounds for larger fish and for fishermen. Striped mullet (*Mugil cephalus*), barracuda (*Sphyraena barracuda*), snook (*Centropomus undecimalis*), palometa or longfin pompano (*Trachinotus goodei*), scaled sardines (*Harengula pensacola*), mojarra or silver jennys (*Eucinostomus gula*), and mangrove snappers (*Lutjanus griseus*) are some of the most frequently harvested fish within the Bahía de Gracias.

The Bahía de Gracias is a large bay. However, for the most part it is quite shallow. Its narrow entrance protects it from the intrusion of heavy seas and the fact that no industries are located nearby has kept the waters relatively clean. The larger eastern body of the bay has an average depth of one fathom, or *braza*, and is favored as a fishing ground for striped mullet. The smaller western part of the bay is much deeper, averaging between two and three fathoms. In these waters a much more diverse number of species are caught by fishermen.

At the mouth of the bay, and along much of the *municipio's* shore line, coral reefs live on the continental shelf and provide habitat for a multitude of different marine species. Coral reefs are best defined as being:

compacted and cemented assemblages of skeletons and skeletal sediment of sedentary organisms living in warm marine waters within water depths of strong illumination. They are constructional



physiographic features of tropical seas consisting fundamentally of a rigid calcareous framework mainly composed of the interlocked and encrusted skeletons of reef-building (*hermatypic*) corals and crustose coralline algae. (Levinton 1982:395)

Corals are only found in the neritic zone. Neritic species living on these coral reefs supply the bulk of marine proteins harvested by Dominican fisheries. Pelagic (deep water) migratory species, such as sailfish, tuna, mackerel, and swordfish, are also captured by Dominican fisher folk, but in much smaller numbers (Bonnelly de Calventi 1975:11). In Luperón, pelagic species are only sought during a few months of the year. They compose a minor part of the total annual yield of the local fishing industry.

The coral reefs off the coast of Luperón are constantly being washed by a heavy surf which provides an important supply of nutrients for their growth. Carried by the westward flow of the North Equatorial Current, and by prevailing north by northeast winds, these nutrients and salts provide crucial ingredients for the growth of plankton. However, as mentioned previously, the tropical waters of the Atlantic which sweep the north coast of Hispaniola contain relatively meager numbers of phytoplanktonic life (G. Rodríguez 1973:43-46).

The sea is far from sterile off the north coast of Hispaniola, but it does not provide enough planktonic life to support the concentrations of fish species found in more temperate waters of the Atlantic. The floor of the Atlantic off the coast of Luperón quickly drops into very deep waters 400 meters from the shore line. This deep water supports relatively few marine species sought by *luperonenses*. It is the narrow bands of coral reefs throughout tropical and subtropical waters which provide nutrient rich oasis' for marine species. Space is limited on these reefs. Territoriality is common, and competition for space is fierce, among inhabitants of coral reefs. One of the results of this competition is that, while a wide variety of species can be found living around coral reefs, numbers of any one species are likely to be limited (Boaden and Seed 1985:100-102).

The inshore coral reef provides the fisher folk of Luperón with a host of commercially important marine species. Easily accessible from the shore, or by boat, reef fish compose the bulk of the marine proteins harvested by the inshore artisanal fisher folk living in Luperón. The following is a list of the reef fish harvested by *luperonenses* for both commercial and subsistence needs during the 1989: Barrelfish (*Palinurichthys perciformis*); Yellowtail snapper (*Ocyurus chrysurus*); Cubera snapper (*Lutjanus cyanopterus*); Muttonsnapper (*L. analis*); Schoolmaster (*L. apodus*); Golden-striped bass (*Grammistes sexlineatus*); Doctorfish, also called surgeonfish, (*Acanthurus chirurgas*); various species of grunts (*Haemulon* sp.); various members of the parrotfish genus (*Scarus* sp.); and less frequently, a variety of Butterflyfish (*Chaetodon* sp.) and Angelfish (both *Pomacanthus* sp. and *Holacanthus* sp. were captured).

The coral reef is an excellent place to capture octopus and lobster. Occasionally, lobsters are trapped in nets placed on the reef. In the past, both lobsters and octopus were harvested with specially constructed traps, but today this method is used rarely. They are more commonly harvested by divers using masks, snorkels, swim fins, and spear-guns. Lobsters are sometimes caught by hand, but an octopus is always speared. Both species bring high prices and are heavily exploited. A consequence of this hunting pressure is that they are becoming increasingly more difficult to find on the inshore reefs.

Just beyond the outer coastal reef the sea floor descends sharply. This occurs at various distances from the shore line along Luperón's coast, but typically beyond 500 meters from shore the water is already more than 100 meters in depth. Along this edge, where the outer reef plunges steeply down into the depths, another favorite fishing territory is located. To fish this area an individual must have access to a seaworthy boat. This is where the artisanal fishermen harvest deep water species.

Using hand-lines baited with fish, or using handmade lures (jigs), fishermen seek out the deep water species day and night at depths of more than 50 fathoms. Night

fishing is enhanced by the use of a method of "jacking." Small light bulbs, powered by batteries and encased so as to be waterproof, are lowered into the depths to attract fish to the fishermen's lines, or lights attached to the boats are used at night to attract nocturnal fish who feed near the surface. Favorite species harvested using this method include: Squirrelfish (*Holocentrus ascensionis*); red snapper (*Lutjanus campechanus*); dog snapper (*Lutjanus jocu*); various species of hinds (*Epinephalus* sp.); and infrequently, a fortunate fishermen will capture a giant sea bass (*Stereolepis gigas*). Red snapper is considered a first-class commercial fish (Davik 1978:54-55). The others are all considered second-class commercial species, but still command a fair market price (Davik 1978:54-55). The time it takes to harvest these species can be extensive, but the prices they command in the marketplace makes them worth the extra effort for the inshore fishermen.

#### Fishing the Offshore Banks and for Pelagic Species

Until now I have concentrated on the marine environment found close to the shores of Luperón. These waters are easily accessible to anyone who has a small boat or who has the appropriate diving equipment. Twenty years ago this was the territorial limit of fishing for Luperón fisher folk. In recent years, with the introduction of mechanized fishing technology such as diesel engines, large boats, and air compressors for diving, new territories far offshore have become favorite fishing grounds for the few *luperonenses* who can afford this type of equipment.

One local fisherman is an owner of a large boat which can make the trip out to these distant fishing grounds. Many more fishermen can be found exploiting these banks working as wage laborers in the employ of nonfishing entrepreneurs not living in the

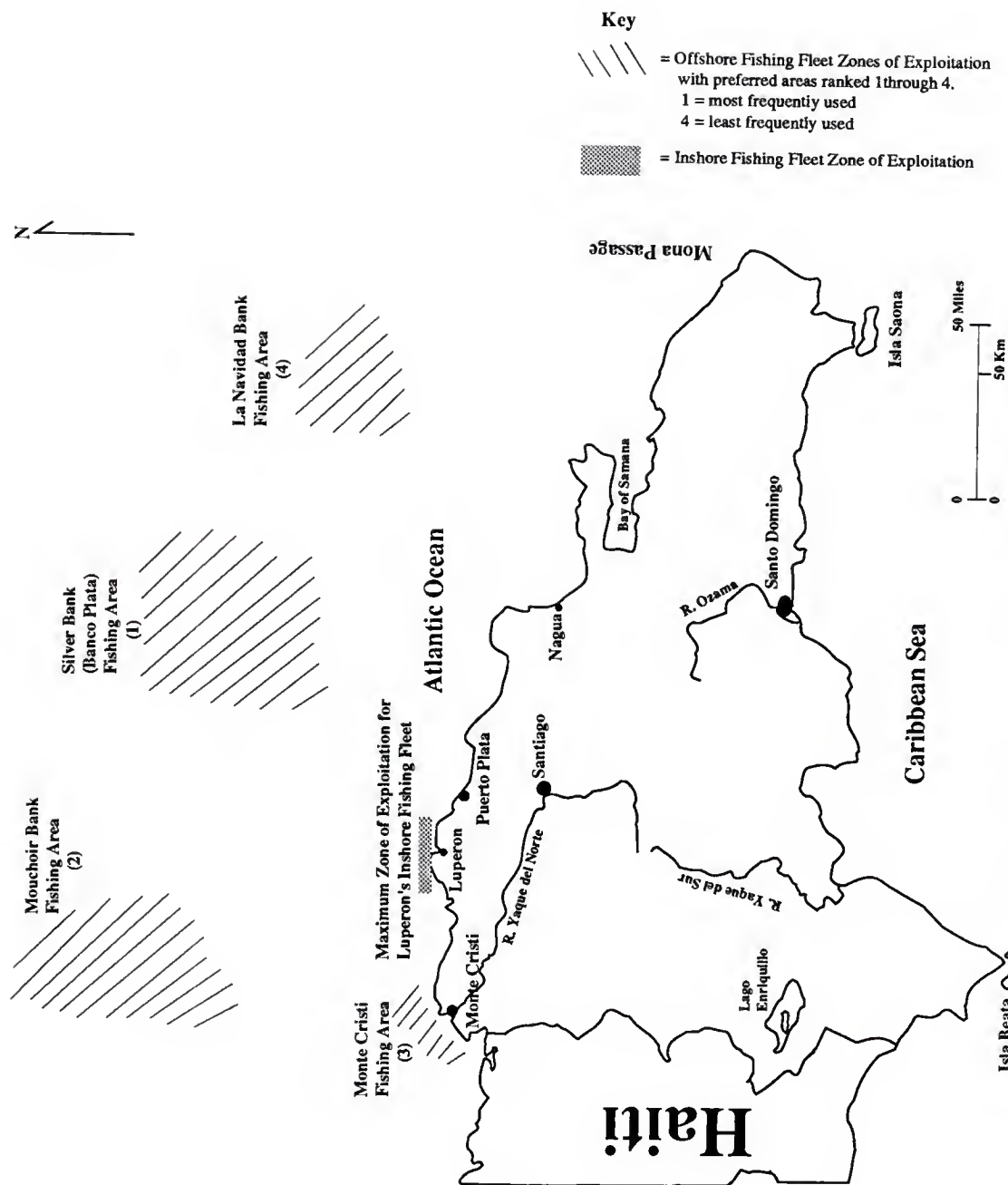


Figure 5: Luperon's Inshore and Offshore Fishing Fleets' Zones of Exploitation.



community. These entrepreneurs own the majority of the larger offshore fishing vessels sailing out of Luperón. Loaded down with several smaller boats on their decks, and a crew of twelve to twenty-six, these boats may spend up to twenty days at sea fishing the Silver bank, the Mouchoir bank, or infrequently, the Navidad bank (see Figure 5).

The Silver bank, or Banco Plata as it is referred to locally, is the most frequently utilized offshore bank by Luperón's mechanized fishing fleet. Lying approximately 96 kilometers to the northeast of the Bahía de Gracias, it is easily accessible in a single day's journey. The Silver bank is composed of 1,955 square kilometers of coral reef (Hartshorn *et al.* 1981:63). It is a rich fishing ground for neritic species. All of the banks are submerged in shallow water and the reef species are easily accessible. Divers using spear-guns, and fishermen using nets or hand-lines, find a rich bounty of fish, making the long trip financially worthwhile. The species harvested on these banks are the same as those captured by members of the inshore fishery, but because these areas are further offshore, the marine resources are not, as yet, depleted. The fishermen working the offshore banks are generally more selective in the species they hunt. They harvest only those species which bring the highest market prices. Conch, lobster, octopus, grouper, snapper, and grunts are the most sought after species.

The Mouchoir bank is the second favorite fishing location of the mechanized offshore fishing fleet of Luperón. This bank is located approximately 150 kilometers to the north-northwest of the Bahía de Gracias. It is located close to the Turks and Caicos islands. The Mouchoir bank is more distant and not as large as the Silver bank, but several Luperón fishing boat captains prefer this area because it is not as heavily fished. Two other fishing grounds, only rarely fished by *luperonenses*, are the Navidad bank (772 square kilometers) found further to the east of the Silver bank, and the waters between Monte Cristi (Banco Monte Cristi, 892 square kilometers) and the island of Tortuga, off the Haitian coast, far to the west of Luperón. The zone between Monte

Cristi and the island of Tortuga is frequently utilized by *luperonense* fishermen during the autumn months when fear of hurricanes keeps them closer to shore.

La Navidad bank is almost never utilized by *luperonense* fishermen. In all of 1989, only one trip was recorded returning from this destination. Its long distance from the community, and the fact that fishermen from many other communities utilize this location, makes the La Navidad bank a poor fourth choice for the mechanized offshore fisher folk of Luperón.

The time traveling to and from these offshore fishing grounds is not wasted. While the boats are underway, trolling lines are thrown overboard in the hope that a few pelagic fish species will be caught. While pelagic species comprise only a minor part of the total quantity of marine resources harvested by Luperón's fisher folk, the prices they command are quite high. Members of the tunny family such as albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) and skipjack or bonita (*Sarda sarda*) are caught only in rare instances; however, when they are harvested the price for these species obtained in the market place is equivalent to other second-class species. Blue and white marlin (*Makaira* sp.) are hardly ever caught by commercial fishermen, and the same is true of sailfish (*Istiophorus platypterus*), but these species are avidly sought by sports fishermen. Tourists staying at the Luperón Beach Resort are beginning to fish for these species in charter boats off the coast of Luperón.

Other pelagic species caught by commercial fishermen include such migratory species as yellow jack (*Caranx bartholomaei*), king mackerel (*Scomberomorus cavalla*), Spanish mackerel (*Scomberomorus maculatus*), and the jack mackerel (*Trachurus symmetricus*). During the months from November to June, these species are a favorite alternative catch to the neritic species which are harvested year-round.

Sharks are occasionally caught offshore and most species are considered edible. Favored species include nurse sharks (*Ginglymostoma cirratum*) and lemon sharks (*Negaprion brevirostris*). The fisher folk of Luperón have great respect for sharks. No

divers or fishermen have been injured seriously by sharks in recent years; but stories of fishermen who drowned in accidents, and whose bodies were savaged by sharks more than a decade ago, are still frequently mentioned. The dangerous nature of these animals makes them be treated gingerly at all times. More will be said about fishermen and sharks later in this chapter.

Finally, I would like to mention three other offshore species which are harvested. Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) meat is a favorite dish in Dominican cuisine. Since 1991, hawksbill turtles are protected by law. In 1989, these turtles could still be legally caught at certain times of the year. The same is true for the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) and the olive ridleys turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*). The shells of these species are used for making jewelry and the meat is sold in many restaurants. Even during the period in 1989 when these turtles were nesting, and their harvesting was banned, it was possible to order fresh turtle meat at local restaurants. Legally protected only on paper, these species are harvested actively by inhabitants because of the great demand for their meat and shell. As long as individuals are willing to pay high prices for these marine species, whether they are listed as endangered or not, they will be hunted illicitly by *luperonenses* who are in need of the extra money these animals can provide their families.

### Fresh Water Natural Resources

Bodies of fresh water large enough to contain edible species of fish are scarce in Luperón. There are only two rivers which flow year-round and lakes are nonexistent. Several large ponds, created to provide a reliable source of water for cattle during the dry summer months, are large enough to support a small population of fish. Fish from fresh water sources play a minor role in the subsistence of local inhabitants and have no commercial importance whatsoever. However, no source of food is overlooked by

*luperonenses* and those inhabitants living near these bodies of fresh water fish occasionally for fresh water species to supplement their diet.

In the past, the Taino frequently captured fresh water fish utilizing such technological innovations as fish weirs and poisons. Fish weirs were made of wooden poles driven closely together in the mud of the of a river or lagoon in such a design as to force fish swimming downstream into a trap from which they could not escape. Fish poisons, obtained from local plants, typically from cassava, were used in a manner similar to the *barbasco* poison still being used by Amazonian peoples. A quiet stretch of river or lagoon would be selected and the poison would be poured into the water. The fish, stunned or killed outright by the poison, would float to the surface and the Taino would simply gather the disabled fish from the water. Fish poisoning is no longer being employed, but fish weirs are still being utilized by rural Dominicans.

Bernardo Vega has documented this technology being employed in several regions of the country: Samaná province; Barahona province; along Samaná Bay in El Seibo province; and at the mouths of many of the countries rivers (1980:315). The construction of these weirs is as follows:

Este sistema de pesca, descrito por los cronistas [Spanish writers from the contact period], consiste en una serie de estacas de caña o de palos de mangles, hincados en el lodo, muy juntos entre sí al estar entrelazados con bejucos, y que cubren toda, o casi toda, la desembocadura de un río, o parte importante de una laguna, o de una ensenada tranquila en el mar. Estas empalizadas acuáticas obligan a los peces a seguir todos una dirección, dada por su forma de embudo, al final del cual existe un área en forma de círculo o doble círculo donde convergen las empalizadas y los peces y de donde no pueden salir estos últimos. Es de esta trampa de donde se recogen los pescados. (Vega 1980:315)

At the mouths of both the Bajabonico and Lorán rivers in the *municipio* of Luperón, fish weirs similar to those described above can be found.

The fish weirs of Luperón are not as complex as those described by Vega. In the past, wooden poles and reeds were used to make the weirs of the *luperonenses*. Today, nylon fish nets have replaced the closely placed reeds formerly driven into the



mud, but in principle the function of the modern weirs are the same. I never observed the weir on the Bajabonico river being used by local fisher folk, but on three separate occasions the Lorán river weir was utilized by people living in Cambiaso. The method they employed was as follows: (1) locals strung from poles driven into the mud about one meter apart, a nylon net with finely woven mesh no larger than two centimeters in diameter; (2) after this net was placed on the poles, people waded into the river upstream and began to move down the river in the direction of the net, splashing and beating the water with sticks and their hands, driving the fish towards the net; (3) as the beaters neared the net, two individuals began to form a U shape with the loose ends of the net located on the banks of the river by moving upstream; (4) other individuals unhooked the net from the poles in the river and the individuals with the ends of the net on the banks moved together so they met at mid-stream, effectively closing off the escape route of the trapped fish; and finally, (5) the net was hauled up onto the bank full of the captured fish.

The majority of the fish captured using this method were mullet. They abound in the brackish water of the river near its mouth before it enters the sea. Some tilapia (*Tilapia nilotica*) were also harvested intermixed with the mullet. The mullet were sold to local middlemen, but the tilapia, because of their small size, were typically taken home by the fisher folk to be eaten. The term fisher folk is used here because in this type of fishing both men and women were observed working together. The women worked as beaters and received the same share of the harvested fish as the male helpers. The owner of the net, who was the same male individual on all three occasions, received one-half of the fish caught. The rest was divided among the helpers in equal portions.

By and large, this is the extent of fresh water fishing by *luperonenses*. Local boys go fishing occasionally with hooks and line in the large ponds found in the *municipio*; but this is more for enjoyment than subsistence. The fish found in these ponds bite aggressively, but due to their diminutive size many are needed to supply a decent meal.

Anything caught is taken home to be eaten. While the youngsters find fishing in these ponds a source of enjoyment and recreation, little goes to waste in the *municipio*, and a mother gladly accepts these small fish as the contributions of a proud son to the household. Children learn early that to help the household economy in any way, big or small, is viewed by community members as a sign of respect and maturity.

### The Social Organization of Fishing

Individuals who engage in fishing as their primary economic activity exhibit the same social, technological, and economic variations as those individuals lumped into the broad category called agriculturalists. Fisher folk can be involved in primarily subsistence oriented activities using the simplest of tools or work on a huge factory ship as part of a highly industrialized corporate approach to fishing. However, unlike agriculturalists who typically control a defined territory for their economic enterprise, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, fisher folk exploit what can best be described as a common property resource over which they, as individuals, have little control.

Most fishing cultures seek to regulate access to common property resources through mechanisms of exclusion. Typically, the use of certain technologies over others, knowledge of the local marine environment, and temporary usufruct rights (for example, the first boat fishing has exclusive rights to an area), work to limit the numbers of fisher folk harvesting any one area or species. Of all the mechanisms listed above, access to fishing technology is the most important exclusionary device utilized in Luperón.

Control of the means of production varies widely among Caribbean fishing individuals and the fisher folk of Luperón are no exception. Three categories of fisher folk are evident in the community of Luperón: The proletarian offshore fishermen who work primarily for a wage paid per trip on large seagoing craft owned by nonfishing

entrepreneurs; the artisanal inshore fishermen whose main occupation is fishing but, due to the lack of capital, utilize equipment which limits their range to the inshore coastal waters; and, finally, the subsistence-oriented fishing individuals and those members of the community who exploit the littoral and marine resources part-time to supplement their primary terrestrial economic activities.

Membership in each category is defined by a different set of fishing methods, marketing techniques, and access to capital for technological investment. The fisher folk of Luperón have responded to the introduction of tourism, and the increased demand for high quality marine products which it has initiated regionally, in different ways due to the distinctions above. This important issue will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter when the marketing variations found among three categories of Luperón fisher folk is described.

One general observation is that gender is an important limiting criteria for membership in both the offshore fishing fleet and the inshore artisanal fishing fleet. No women are allowed membership in either of these fishing groups. Fishing from boats is viewed as dangerous work not fit for women. There are numerous examples throughout the world fisheries where women are fully involved in fishing which refutes this local argument (c.f. Acheson 1981:298); nevertheless, in the Dominican Republic women do not participate in boat fishing. Women can only be found engaged in the activity of exploiting littoral and marine resources from the coastal fringe. Line fishing from the shore, gathering shellfish on the rocky coast in the littoral zone, or, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, helping to harvest tilapia on occasion in the brackish river mouth of the Lorán, is where one encounters women involved actively in local fishing activities.

This strict sexual division of labor applies equally to the regional marketing of marine products. Unlike Haiti where women take an active role in the marketing of marine products and most agricultural produce as well (Hay 1985:103), or in other

regions of the Caribbean where women play an important role in small-scale marketing as exemplified in the role of the "higgler," "huckster," or "vendeuse" (c.f. Handler 1974:128; Horowitz 1967:37; Katzin 1959:421-440), in Luperón, as elsewhere in the Dominican Republic, marketing is a male dominated activity (c.f. Stoffle 1986:82). The only time women were observed involved in the marketing of marine resources was selling cleaned *burgao*, the small mollusc collected on the rocks of the shore line, to the middleman in the community of Cambiaso, and two older women who sold cooked fish most evenings in the town of Luperón. Otherwise, the distribution of marine products was solely controlled by males.

Marine resources, being highly perishable, require either fast distribution or refrigeration in order to prevent spoilage. Owning refrigeration technology is beyond the financial capability of most *luperonenses* fisher folk and, as a result, the distribution and marketing of local marine products is usually not controlled by those who capture this bounty. Members of all three groups of fishing individuals have special arrangements with nonfishing individuals who act as intermediaries between the fisher folk and the larger markets in the region. The harvest of the offshore fishing fleet is controlled by the nonfishing boat owners who transport the seafood to markets in Puerto Plata on trucks which they own. In this way they control both the harvesting phase of the operation and the first stage of the distribution process which increases the profits obtained.

The inshore fleet members and those shore fisher folk who harvest more than what they need for subsistence purposes sell their marine produce to local intermediaries. It is these intermediaries who control both the local refrigeration and transportation technology necessary to reach the distant whole-sale fish markets in Puerto Plata. I will demonstrate in this chapter that it is these nonfishing intermediaries and the nonfishing boat owners of the offshore fishing fleet who reap the majority of economic benefits



derived from an increased demand for fresh seafood connected to the growth of regional tourism.

As mentioned previously, the most important categoric distinction among local fishing individuals is ownership of fishing technology. The amount of capital available for investment determines membership in any of the three fishing groups. Basically, Luperón's fishing individuals are involved in this activity because other economic opportunities are extremely limited. Of the 53 fishing individuals surveyed in 1989, only 14 (26%) owned any land besides the plot on which their houses stood. Among those who owned land, 10 owned less than 39 *tareas* (71%), two individuals owned 45 and 58 *tareas* respectively, and two individuals owned 95 and 145 *tareas* each.

The two individuals who owned the largest land holdings in 1989 were also boat captains of the offshore fleet. One of these individuals, Negro, was forty-two and owned the only offshore fishing boat among community members in Luperón. He also owned a small pickup truck in which he transported his catch to the fish markets of Puerto Plata. He told me he purchased land whenever he could afford to as an investment. Negro planned to sell his boat or hire individuals to fish for him when he was too old to dive any longer. He said that he had about five good years of fishing left and then he would be ready to quit. He planned to raise cattle (he already owned eight head) on the land he owned and retire from fishing actively himself.

The other substantial landowner lived in Puerto Plata and captained an offshore fishing boat for his brother who was the nonfishing owner of the vessel. Santos, too, was investing his savings in land for retirement. He was buying land in a small village in the foothills to the south of the city of Puerto Plata where his wife was born. Land around Puerto Plata was too expensive and he was tired of all the noise and crime in the city. When he was ready to retire from fishing (he was 46 years old in 1989), he planned to raise poultry for eggs and meat in his wife's village in the foothills of the

Cordillera Septentrional. In addition to this investment Santos also owned a small *colmado* in Puerto Plata which his wife ran while he was at sea.

The two individuals who owned the 45 *tarea* and 58 *tarea* holdings did not devote most of their time to fishing as an economic activity. The individual who owned the 58 *tareas* lived in Cambiaso and considered himself to be principally a farmer. In 1989, he grew peanuts, *yuca*, and plantains on his hillside plots and fished with a hook and line mainly for subsistence needs and recreation. The man who owned the 45 *tareas* lived in the town of Luperón and also said his principal occupation was that of a farmer. He fished off the coast of Luperón with a spear-gun during the summer and winter months when his crops did not need attention daily. He claimed that approximately one quarter of his income came from fishing. He specialized in harvesting lobster, octopus, conch, and grouper from the local waters and sold most of his seafood to the local tourist restaurants or, on the rare occasions when they did not want his catch, to one of the local intermediaries.

The vast majority of the other fisher folk were landless or owned holdings too small to provide for their livelihoods. They may have inherited a fishing boat or net from a relative and learned the skills of fishing while growing up. Recruitment into the economic activity of fishing is largely through familial connections and/or friendships. Only 7 individuals of 53 surveyed were self-taught (13%) and all these individuals only fished from the shore. The majority of the boat crews of the inshore and offshore fleets were introduced to fishing by close male relatives such as fathers, uncles, or brothers (58%), while the rest were taught the trade by close friends (42%). Several families in Luperón (4 cases) had two or more generations of fishermen working together as boat crews. On three of the offshore fishing boats either brothers were working together (1 case) or there was a father - son combination on a boat (2 cases). Learning to fish and learning where to fish is a skill requiring long hours of practice which the older generation imparts to the younger in Luperón over many seasons of working together.

### Harvesting Methods of the Fisher Folk

In this section an outline of the various harvesting techniques utilized by the fisher folk of Luperón is presented. The techniques utilized by the *luperonenses* do not vary greatly from those employed by other Dominican fisher folk (c.f. Krute-George 1978:21-23), nor is there great variation among the tools employed by the three groups of the fisher folk in Luperón. The only tool found solely among one group is the air compressor used by the divers of the offshore fleet; otherwise, all other tools of production are used at least occasionally by some members of all three groups.

The unique circumstances of fishing the offshore banks and the larger amount of capital invested by the owners of the offshore fishing boats makes the use of air compressors cost effective. Some subsistence-oriented and part-time, nonboat owning, fishermen from Luperón and Cambiaso use spear-guns, masks, swim fins, and snorkels to fish the narrow coastal shelf. By diving from the surface and holding their breath they, too, are capable of selecting their quarry underwater; however, since the coastal shelf rapidly plunges to great depths and the first-class marine species sought after by divers like lobster, octopus, and grouper are becoming increasingly scarce on the inshore reefs according to local informants, using an expensive device like an air compressor is not considered cost effective by the inshore fishermen, nor could most afford to buy one even if they wanted to.

Other fishing tools such as the *atarraya*, hand-lines, long-lining, "jacking," drift nets, seine nets, and gill nets can be found being employed by members of both the inshore and offshore fishing fleets. However, what differentiates these groups is the emphasis each group puts on one or more harvesting techniques. The offshore fleet relies heavily on air compressors and fishermen/divers hunting with spear-guns in the shallow waters covering the coral reefs of the Mouchoir and Silver banks. This technique allows the fishermen/divers to select the marine animals with the highest

market price in an environment where these species are not yet scarce, making each trip's haul of high quality marine produce high economic returns as well.

When weather or water conditions are unfavorable for diving other methods may be substituted. Off the edge of these banks, at great depths, long-line fishing for red snapper is done sometimes by members of the offshore fleet. In the winter months a *chinchorro*, or seine net, might be utilized to capture a school of tuna swimming near the banks. Before a trip the fishermen of the offshore fleet will throw an *atarraya* in Luperón bay to capture bait fish for their hooks in case long-lining will be employed during the trip. Generally, these methods are all after thoughts to the principal method of the offshore fishermen which is spear fishing on the banks. However, during the autumn months many boats from the offshore fishing fleet choose to avoid the banks. Fear of hurricanes keep many boat captains of the offshore fleet near the coast of Hispaniola during this time where they fish between Luperón and Tortuga island, off the north coast of Haiti, and they utilize other techniques more frequently during the autumn months than during other times of the year. The following is a brief description of each technique utilized by the fisher folk of Luperón.

### The Atarraya

The *atarraya* is a hand-held cast net used in the shallow waters of Luperón's littoral zone. The net is circular in shape, no more than 4-5 meters in diameter, and made of finely woven nylon. The mesh is close together, usually no more than 2-3 cm. apart, and the edges of the circular net are lightly weighted with small metal pieces woven into the net. There is one central line in the middle of the net which the thrower retains in his hand in order to retrieve the net after each cast. Great skill is required to throw an *atarraya* onto the surface of the water in an even flat circle. The net sinks quickly to the



bottom trapping fish within its folds. The net is then retrieved by hauling on the casting line in the thrower's hand and the trapped fish are removed.

The *atarraya* is used principally by fishermen to capture bait fish for line fishing. It is also used by fishermen in Luperón to capture mullet in the Bahía de Gracias and by the fishermen of Cambiaso to capture mullet living in the shallow lagoon to the east of the village and tilapia in the Lorán river. Relatively inexpensive, in 1989 an *atarraya* cost an individual about U.S. \$40.00 to buy new or about U.S. \$20.00 to make themselves. No women were ever seen using an *atarraya*, but male members of the offshore fleet, inshore fleet, and part-time shore fishing groups were all observed using *atarrayas*.

#### The Chinchorro or Hanging Net

Drag nets used for trawling along the bottom of the sea, called *chinchorros de arrastre*, are not employed by fishermen in Luperón or Cambiaso. Uneven bottoms with jagged coral outcroppings would quickly slash this type of net to ribbons. The type of *chinchorro* used by fishermen in Luperón is a hanging variety which floats down from the surface of the water. A *chinchorro* is a generic term in Luperón for a variety of hanging nets which differ in mesh size, length, depth, and shape.

*Chinchorros* with large mesh sizes are used to harvest grouper, lobster, and shallow water snappers during the months when these species are found in the coastal waters in larger concentrations (end of November to March). Smaller mesh sizes are used to harvest other coastal species found on the coastal reefs and the Bahía de Gracias.

*Chinchorros* are woven from nylon line which is sold in local stores in three sizes. Size one is a fine line used only for making the *atarraya*, while size two and size three nylon lines are used for making *chinchorros*. *Chinchorros* range in size from small ones which are 50 fathoms (one fathom, called a *braza* in Spanish equals 6 feet) in

length (300 ft.) and 2 fathoms in depth (12 ft.), to the largest ocean nets which are 150 fathoms in length (900 ft.) and 6 fathoms in depth (36 ft.). Most of the *chinchorros* in Luperón and Cambiaso were between 50 fathoms and 100 fathoms in length, with 100 fathoms (600 ft.) long and 3 fathoms (18 ft.) depth being the size preferred by the majority of fishermen.

Many of the *chinchorros* used in Luperón have a "purse," or specialized part in the center of the net to capture the fish, which local fishermen called a *copa*. The composition of the *chinchorros* with purses are woven in the following manner; the mesh (*malla*) is 10 cm. in width at the far corners of the net, 5 cm. wide beginning in the middle of the net leading towards the purse in the center, and 2.5 cm. mesh in the purse itself. Fish swimming along the net are herded ultimately into the purse where the narrow entrance makes escape difficult. *Chinchorros* with purses are used to harvest migratory school fish in the deep waters off the coast of Luperón and are sometimes placed in the bay of Luperón in a stationary position to harvest schools of fish swimming in the bay.

Local varieties of *chinchorros* also include gill nets. These nets do not have purses and the fish are caught when they trap themselves in the mesh of the net while trying to swim through the net. Some fishermen try to surround schools of fish with the gill net variety of *chinchorro* and then haul both ends of the net towards the boat simultaneously. This traps the fish in a pocket in the middle of the net in a similar fashion as purse seine nets. but chiefly local gill nets are used to entangle fish in the mesh. Gill nets are used both in the bay and in the calmer waters of the inshore reefs.

*Chinchorros* are expensive to make. In 1989, the price of weaving a new mid-sized *chinchorro* 100 fathoms in length was about U.S. \$285.00. Nets were constantly being repaired and sections rewoven. New nets were made rarely because of their high cost. Both men and women were observed repairing nets. In 1989, only one local *luperonense* specialized in the making and repairing nets as part of his livelihood.

Wives and daughters of fishermen are skilled in the art of net repair, and nets hung to dry, waiting to be repaired, are a common sight in front of the inshore fishermen homes in both Luperón and Cambiaso.

### Various Methods of Hook and Line Fishing

Hook and line fishing is practiced by members of the offshore fishing fleet, inshore fishing fleet, and subsistence-oriented fisher folk. The most technologically unsophisticated, but effective, method employed locally is one utilized by the poor shore fisher folk of Cambiaso and Luperón who fish principally for subsistence purposes. A single nylon line with a baited hook at the end, using a metal nut as a weight, is cast out from a dock or the shore line. The line is typically wrapped around an empty clorox bottle and the line is hauled in by hand when a fish is hooked. Simple, but effective, many fish found their way into *luperonense* pots using this method.

Both offshore and inshore fishing fleet individuals utilize long-lining to capture deep water species of fish such as red snapper and large groupers. Weighted fishing lines, using multiple baited hooks located every one or two meters along the lower portion of the line, are dropped down to depths of more than 50 fathoms. Inshore fleet members fish the deep water past the reef walls between one-half and one kilometer from shore, both during the day and at night, using this method. Offshore fishermen often fish the edges of the offshore banks where the shallow coastal shelf stops ends and the ocean floor drops down to great depths. Time consuming as this method is, the fish captured at this depth, especially red snapper, command some of the highest market prices for first- and second-class marine species, only being surpassed by the price paid per pound for lobster.

During the late autumn months beginning in October mackerel can be found near the shores of Luperón. The market price for mackerel is low but since abundant quantities

are harvested this catch is lucrative. Mackerel are captured using both *chinchorros* and hook and lines. Being voracious hunters, mackerel are easily captured on hand lines using hooks which have pieces of tin foil attached as lures. Jigging for mackerel is practiced just beyond the edge of the inshore reef where the waters of the coastal current bring the schools of migrating mackerel near Luperón.

Finally, another method of hook and line fishing observed was "jacking." "Jacking" is a nocturnal fishing method and involves using a light source to attract fish near the boat. Many types of fish are attracted to a boat carrying a light and these fish are harvested with hand-lines or, as in the case of squid, are captured using nets. Twelve volt electric bulbs, powered by rechargeable batteries, are commonly employed when "jacking" for fish. While more productive than fishing with hand-lines during the day, the cost of recharging batteries before every trip (car batteries are commonly used) also makes this method more expensive. The inshore fleet uses this method on the edge of the coastal reef at the point of the drop off and some offshore fishing boats occasionally use this method to capture nocturnal species on the offshore banks.

#### Spear-guns, Air Compressors, and Diving Equipment

Harvesting of marine species by the use of diving equipment is the only fishing method employed by *luperonenses* which allows them to actually select the type of prey to be captured. The drawback of this method is that the equipment required for spear fishing is expensive. In 1989, diving equipment including face mask, swim fins, and snorkel cost around U.S. \$95.00. Spear-guns were an additional expense and, depending on the type purchased, were a good deal more expensive than all other items required for diving combined. The cheapest variety of spear-gun, commonly used by *luperonenses*, is the Hawaiian sling. This is simply a spear including a harpoon point powered by a hand-held rubber band catapult device which drives the spear forward to



harpoon a fish. These devices cost approximately U.S. \$55.00 in 1989. More sophisticated spear-guns range from rubber-band driven rifle-like devices, often referred to as French rubber harpoons, to compressed air spear-guns. Compressed air spear-guns cost over U.S. \$160.00 in 1989. I knew only two divers in Luperón who owned compressed air spear-guns.

Spear fishing is also one of the more strenuous methods of fishing employed in Luperón. The oldest fishermen/diver encountered in Luperón was 46 years old. He had been fishing for almost twenty years and diving for the last twelve. In the past few years this individual had been saving money so that he could stop diving and retire to devote his energies exclusively to terrestrial economic activities. He said his luck had been good and he was still healthy, but diving each day was getting tiring. Spending 30 minutes to an hour below per dive, at depths between 7 and 17 meters, and breathing air pumped down a rubber hose through a regulator while harvesting lobster, conch, and spearing grouper, hinds, snapper, and other marine fish is hard work best suited to young, fit, individuals. The money earned as a diver/fisherman is good but the dangers are real as well.

In 1989, no fisherman sailing from Luperón lost his life in any mishap. Fishing, and particular, spear fishing is hazardous and many of the fishermen told me stories of friends and acquaintances who lost their lives in accidents. The offshore diver/fishermen use air compressors which are really nothing more than paint spraying compressor engines converted for diving. Gasoline driven, these air compressors have long rubber hoses attached which at the other end have regulator mouth-pieces attached. An air compressor, hose, and regulator cost over U.S. \$320.00 in 1989. So equipped, a fishermen/diver can descend as deep as 30 meters if necessary.

Out on the offshore banks individuals rarely go beyond 14 or 17 meters, but some individuals have been known to push the limits of safety. The "bends," also known as caisson disease, occurs when a diver comes up too quickly to the ocean surface from

the abnormal atmospheric pressures of below. Even diving in shallow water only 7 – 14 meters in depth for periods of 30 minutes to an hour and then coming quickly to the surface without decompressing at an intermediate level can result in the "bends."

Several offshore fishermen told me of a fellow diver who always went very deep and spent little time decompressing on the way to the surface. He suffered the "bends" one day in 1987. Soon after reaching the surface he began convulsing and screaming. He was lucky to live through the return voyage and was taken to the hospital in Puerto Plata. Today, he is crippled and can no longer walk unaided. Several fishermen told me that in the past a few offshore divers had died from the "bends."

Another danger the spear-gun fishermen confronts while below is the rare chance of shark attack. Offshore fishermen/divers told me that it is common for sharks to appear while they are spearing fish; attracted by the blood scent and motions of the wounded fish in the water, sharks, being naturally curious, come to investigate. Most speared fish are lifted quickly to the surface by the surface *yola* crew and losses to sharks are minimal. The offshore fishermen/divers have great respect for sharks but told me that only when many are present, or when a single large individual such as a tiger shark is nearby, do they bother to leave the water. More docile types of sharks, such as nurse sharks, are often killed with spears because their meat commands a fair market price.

The only offshore fisherman being injured by a shark during 1989 was a young crew member whose foot was bitten slightly when he placed it carelessly near the mouth of a nurse shark on deck. However, most diver/fishermen had stories of close encounters with gigantic sharks, such as monstrous tiger sharks longer than 4.5 meters, that had surprised them while diving. While some of these stories are likely to be typical seafaring yarns, I can testify to the fact that large sharks are found in the waters off the north coast. In February 1989, a large whale carcass floated onto the inshore reef a few kilometers to the west of the town of Luperón. Viewing the carcass with binoculars from the shore, it was observed that sharks had congregated in large

numbers to feed on this bounty. Several of the sharks observed feeding in the shallow water were close to 3 meters in length and one monster, which dwarfed all the others and was clearly a tiger shark by its markings, appeared to be over 4 meters in length.

Individuals who spear fish from the shore, or from boats along the inshore reefs, also run the risk of attracting unwanted attention from barracuda and sharks. Barracuda are viewed as pests who steal speared fish. In August 1989, I lost a flounder to a barracuda who snatched the fish from my spear while snorkeling just off the beach of the Luperón Beach Resort hotel. Two inshore spear fishermen told me that they have had strings of fish (fish are kept on a long cord 2-4 meters in length attached to the diver's belt) snatched by small sharks.

The inhabitants of Cambiaso told me that they believe that one young man who fished with a spear-gun off the coast of Cambiaso was killed by a large shark in 1986. The 21 year old diver left the shore at around seven o'clock in the morning during the month of March, planning to fish along the western edge of Cambiaso bay at the point where it meets the ocean. He was never seen again. Inhabitants recovered one of his swim fins and part of his snorkel, which had been bitten in two, from the surf the next day. His body was never recovered.

### The Offshore Fishing Fleet

The offshore fishing fleet in Luperón specializes in fishing the territory of the banks and cays located many kilometers from the shores of the Dominican Republic. Specialized equipment and fishing strategies are employed by the members of the offshore fleet not utilized by either the inshore fleet or the shore fisher folk of the region. This specialized equipment includes larger, more seaworthy, fishing craft and, as already mentioned, air compressor diving apparatus.

Offshore fishing vessels exhibit some variation. In 1989, the smallest vessel was 11 meters long, 3 meter wide at mid-deck, had a 100 h.p outboard motor, was made completely of wood, had a small pilot house with room for one or two individuals, had a hold below deck for storing ice and fish, and a small mast. The largest vessel of the offshore fishing fleet was 16 meters long, 4 meter wide at mid-deck, had room below deck to sleep six, had a diesel inboard motor, large hold below deck capable of storing more than two tons of ice and fish, and typically carried four *yolas* strapped on deck when going to sea.

To outfit a boat and crew to fish the offshore banks involves a serious investment of capital far beyond the financial capabilities of most *luperonenses*. It is not surprising that in 1989 only one individual living in the community was the owner/captain of an offshore fishing vessel and this was the smallest boat in the offshore fishing fleet. His boat was purchased used in 1984 for a little over U.S. \$10,000.00 and came with a functioning 70 h.p. inboard diesel engine. The owner purchased a 100 h.p. outboard motor in 1987 for almost U.S. \$2,500.00 as a "back-up" for the diesel engine which he considered unreliable. He invested over U.S. \$12,000.00 on the boat and this figure does not include maintenance costs, fuel, diving equipment, ice, wages for crew, or the cost of transporting the harvest to Puerto Plata in his truck. Fishing the offshore banks requires substantial investment just for initial "start-up" costs. It is not surprising that in 1989 the other four offshore fishing vessels berthed in Luperón were owned by nonfishing entrepreneurs who lived in Puerto Plata. The nonfishing owners hired captains and crew to work for them on these fishing boats.

The crews of these offshore vessels were paid per the trip. Only the captains of each vessel and the fishermen/divers in the offshore fleet also received a percentage of the harvest which ranged from 25 percent to 33 percent of the net profit of each trip. *Yola*/air compressor tenders, cooks, mechanics, and deck hands received a salary. Figures paid per trip depended on the position but the lowest paid individuals who



cleaned the harvested fish and tended the storage hold received at least U.S. \$20.00 for a trip lasting one week's duration.

Trips made per month ranged from an average of 2.5 for the smallest offshore fishing boat in Luperón called the Taino, which spent rarely more than five or six days on the banks per trip, to 1.5 for the larger fishing boats such as the Sirena I and II. Voyages made by these boats lasted typically between eight and eleven days. Fishermen/divers whose jobs were skilled and highly dangerous earned much more in 1989. One fisherman/diver told me that he earned on a poor trip around U.S. \$95.00, while an exceptionally productive trip lasting several weeks might yield as much as U.S. \$280.00 after the shares had been divided between the captain and divers.

Mentioned previously, in 1989 only one offshore captain and crew called Luperón home. The rest of the offshore fleet was composed of individuals living in Puerto Plata who commuted to Luperón whenever a trip was planned. The size of the crew sailing on offshore fishing boats depended on the size of the boat, the number of *yolas* (small 4-6 meter open, wooden, New England dory-like craft) the boat carried, and the number of diver/fishermen on board. The smallest offshore fishing boat, which was crewed by *luperonenses*, never carried more than six individuals including the captain. On this vessel no extra *yolas* were carried onboard and all fishing was done solely from the main deck. The captain and another individual were the only fishermen/divers and the boat only carried one air compressor which allowed only one diver to be below at a time. Divers sent up fish and mullusks in baskets from the reef below to the deck crew. Other crew members who remained on the surface kept busy cleaning, sorting, and packing the fish and other marine animals into the ice hold.

On the largest offshore fishing vessels as many as twenty-six individuals might be onboard the mother boat when it sailed out of Luperón. Sleeping arrangements were cramped and at night every foot of the deck was occupied by sleeping individuals. During the daylight hours the *yolas* would leave the mother boat to harvest various

sections of the reef in the particular territory of the bank being fished. Normal *yola* crews would be composed on a diver/fisherman, an air compressor/line tender, and another individual who cleaned the catch and made sure the *yola* remained near the diver/fisherman. On the mother boat individuals might spend the time fishing with long-lines, repairing broken equipment, or during the winter months when pelagic (migratory) species were in the region fishing with *chinchorros* to capture schools of mackerel and tuna.

The length of time spent at sea by each boat crew varies considerably. The size of the boat, success at harvesting marine species, weather, accidents, and individual preferences of each boat's captain or owner affect the length of each voyage. In Table 8 a comparison of two boats' crew size, length of trips, total catch, and catch composition is made. The *Sirena I* was one of the larger fishing boats sailing from Luperón (14 meters long) and was crewed by individuals from Puerto Plata. The *Taino* was the smallest offshore fishing boat (11 meters in length) in the fleet and was manned solely by *luperonenses*.

All crew members of the *Taino* surveyed said that voyages lasted normally no longer than seven days. Members of the *Sirena I* surveyed said that the average fishing trip lasted between eight and eleven days, but trips lasting over two weeks were made occasionally. Reasons given by the *Taino* captain for the short duration of his fishing trips included; (1) the boat's small hold which was only capable of carrying a maximum of 1400 lbs of ice and catch, (2) cramped conditions onboard for the crew (maximum capacity for the boat was five or six individuals), and (3) the limited cruising range of the craft due to its small fuel storage capacity.<sup>1</sup> The *Sirena I* captain told me that the length of each trip was determined typically by the time it took to fill the hold with a

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<sup>1</sup> Pounds are used here instead of kilograms because the Dominican fisher folk of the north coast sell their harvest by this measurement. The metric system is never used in the sale of marine species harvested locally.

quantity of first- and second-class marine species. Weather conditions also determined the duration of each voyage, since the nonfishing owner of the boats (the captain of the Sirena I was the brother of the individual who owned both the Sirena I and II) preferred that his vessels head towards shore if strong gales threatened, rather than risk the safety of the boats and crews by riding out the storm on the offshore banks.

Table 8: Examples of Offshore Catches.

| <u>Date &amp; Name<br/>of Boat</u> | <u>Crew Size/ Loc.<br/>Length of trip</u> | <u>Total Catch<br/>in lbs.</u> | <u>1st Class<br/>Sp. in lbs.</u> | <u>2nd Class<br/>Sp. in lbs.</u> | <u>Other<br/>Species</u> |
|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1/26/89<br>Sirena I                | 11 /Silver Bank<br>5 days                 | 575                            | 293                              | 180                              | 102                      |
| 2/5/89<br>Taino                    | 4 /Mouchoir Bank<br>6 days                | 745                            | 186                              | 468                              | 91                       |
| 2/26/89<br>Sirena I                | 14 /Silver Bank<br>8 days                 | 1026                           | 348                              | 585                              | 93                       |
| 4/5/89<br>Taino                    | 4 /Mouchoir Bank<br>6 days                | 896                            | 136                              | 480                              | 280                      |
| 5/4/89<br>Sirena I                 | 14 /Mouchoir Bank<br>11 days              | 1400                           | 100                              | 820                              | 580                      |
| 6/20/89<br>Taino                   | 4 /Mouchoir Bank<br>6 days                | 658                            | 128                              | 430                              | 100                      |
| 7/30/89<br>Sirena I                | 12 /Silver Bank<br>15 days                | 1050                           | 84                               | 740                              | 226                      |
| 9/6/89<br>Taino                    | 5 /Monte Cristi<br>6 days                 | 680                            | 204                              | 280                              | 196                      |
| 10/11/89<br>Sirena I               | 14 /Mouchoir Bank<br>9 days               | 1230                           | 336                              | 680                              | 214                      |
| 10/18/89<br>Taino                  | 4 /Monte Cristi<br>7 days                 | 485                            | 147                              | 276                              | 62                       |
| 12/4/89<br>Sirena I                | 14 / Silver Bank<br>11 days               | 985                            | 134                              | 615                              | 236                      |

Note: 1st class species are defined as lobster, conch, and red snapper.  
 2nd class species are defined as any type of the grouper, sea bass, or hind.  
 Other species harvested include mackerel, shark, other snappers and assorted reef fish which command the lowest market price per pound.

Table 8 illustrates the success that offshore fishing boats using diving apparatus have in making each trip as financially rewarding as possible. The Taino's five voyages shown in Table 8 represent three trips made to the Mouchoir Bank in February, April, and June 1989 and two trips made to the Monte Cristi Bank region in September and October 1989 (the captain avoided the offshore banks during hurricane season). The smallest catch total was 485 pounds of seafood caught on the Monte Cristi Bank during a seven day trip. This figure seems to be quite low; however, 87 percent of the harvest made on this trip was composed of first-class (30 percent) or second-class (57 percent) species, which would command a minimum of U.S. \$1.40 a pound in the fish markets of Puerto Plata, or a gross of U.S. \$605.00 for the trip excluding what was earned for the third-class species (this figure is grossly conservative since it represents only the price of what second-class marine species would fetch in the market place and in reality the gross would be well over U.S. \$800.00). The Taino never returned to port with less than 69 percent of its catch being composed of first- and second-class species, and averaged close to 80 percent of its total harvest being composed of these species for all trips listed in Table 8. The Sirena I exhibited similar returns. From a high of 91 percent, to a low of 66 percent, and with a mean of 79 percent, the crew of the Sirena I also specialized in harvesting the highest quality marine species during each trip.

Other offshore boats' harvests recorded during the course of 1989 exhibited similar patterns. The use of diving apparatus allows offshore divers/fishermen to select the highest quality marine products during the course of each voyage and maximize the market returns per pound for each voyage. The only voyage where first and second-class species did not compose the bulk of the harvest for an offshore boat was a trip made by the Sirena II to the Silver Bank. On November 23, 1989 this boat returned from a eight day voyage with approximately 2300 pounds of marine products in its



hold. Only 425 pounds of the marine species harvested, or 18.5 percent of the harvest, were composed of first and second class species. In addition to six nurse sharks totaling close to 400 pounds, the boat crew had captured three turtles weighing close to 200 pounds, and had filled the rest of the hold with a combined catch of small tuna and mackerel.

The turtle meat and shells command a high price in the market place (mentioned previously is the fact that since 1991 a moratorium on the legal harvesting of sea turtles exists in the Dominican Republic). The main consumers of the meat are Dominican nationals. Turtle shell is transformed into jewelry bought by both Dominicans and tourists alike. The large haul of third-class mackerel and tuna caught by the *Sirena II*, while commanding a low price per pound, weighed enough to make the trip highly profitable for the owner of the vessel. Running into pelagic schools of mackerel and tuna swimming in the deep waters between Luperón and the Silver Bank, the crew of the *Sirena II* had trolled and used *chinchorros* to capture the bulk of its fish during this trip. However, these techniques are only employed when migratory pelagic species are available, typically in the late autumn and early winter months, and the rest of the time the offshore fleet focuses its activities on harvesting only the highest quality marine species.

### The Inshore Fishing Fleet

The inshore fishermen of Luperón are not as specialized in the species harvested as the category of fishermen I have categorized as belonging to the offshore fishing fleet. Most do not have the equipment necessary to dive on the inshore reefs and select the highest quality species; instead, they must rely on less precise harvesting techniques which do not discriminate in the type of species harvested. The only exception to this rule are those individuals who spend most of their time deep water long-line fishing for

red snapper and members of the inshore fleet who in late autumn and early winter focus almost exclusively on harvesting the migratory pelagic species of mackerel and tuna which come close to the shores of Luperón.

Inshore fishing is done typically from a boat called a *yola*. The *yolas* used by the inshore fishermen are the same as those carried by the larger boats of the offshore fishing fleet and can be best described a wooden craft, 4-6 meters in length, 1.5 - 2 meters wide, open to the elements, and similar in form to a New England dory. Most *yolas* in Luperón are powered by 7 h.p. Yamaha outboard engines; however, in 1989 one had a 10 h.p. engine and another was propelled by oars. No *yolas* in Luperón were seen using sails. In Cambiaso, a small village to the east of Luperón, only one of the three *yolas* in the village was powered with an outboard motor. The crews of the other two boats rowed their craft to and from fishing sites along the rocky coast.

A used *yola* could be purchased for as little as U.S. \$475.00 in 1989. However, outboard motors were expensive and a new 7 h.p. motor cost in the vicinity of U.S. \$720.00. Used outboard motors are difficult to find in the Dominican Republic and local fishermen are adept at repairing their motors, often rebuilding them completely from "scratch."

Mentioned previously was that inshore fishermen rely principally on *chinchorros* and long-lining to harvest their marine species. *Chinchorros* are used mainly either in the early morning hours just before dawn or at dusk. Local fishermen said that this was the best time to harvest fish in the bay and on the inshore reefs because both diurnal and nocturnal species can be caught at these times. Some fishermen place *chinchorros* in the bay overnight. This method is used mainly to harvest lobster when they migrate in late autumn and early winter. However, leaving a net unattended increases the chance of it being damaged or stolen. While informants told me that in the past this practice was common among most of the inshore fishermen during the season when lobster were migratory, only two individuals in 1989 were observed leaving their nets

unattended over the course of the evening (they were put in place after dusk at around 9 p.m. and retrieved in the early morning at around 5 a.m.).

Inshore fishermen exhibited a large degree of variation in the time spent fishing. Of the 23 inshore fishermen surveyed in Cambiaso (6) and Luperón (17), 83 percent (19 individuals) said that they spent half a day or less fishing per trip. The other 4 individuals (17 percent) said that each trip they made averaged more than half a day, but less than a full day. The six fishermen surveyed in Cambiaso agreed unanimously that the early morning, just before dawn, was the best time to go fishing. In Luperón, the inshore fishermen surveyed exhibited a wider range of preferences. Eleven individuals preferred to fish in the early morning (65 percent), another group of three individuals (17.5 percent) preferred to fish just at sunset, and three individuals preferred to fish at night (17.5 percent). Five of the individuals who preferred fishing at dusk or at night said their principal method of fishing was long-lining. Fishing for red snapper and deep sea bass is easier at night because these species tend to move closer to the surface and the fishermen do not have to fish as deeply as they would during the day. "Jacking" (using a light bulb to attract fish) is also an effective method of attracting fish used by some members of the artisanal inshore fleet during the nocturnal hours.

The number of trips made per month vary according to weather conditions, equipment breakdown, financial needs, and individual preference. No inshore fishermen will leave the bay if wind and waves produce more than a moderate chop at the bay's entrance. *Yolas* swamp easily, having little freeboard (the part of the craft between top of the gunwale and the water line), and a single wave can fill a *yola* in a matter of seconds. According to my informants most fishermen in Luperón avoid fishing when it rains because they believe the fish are driven from the surface waters by bad weather. High winds and waves also keep fishermen within the confines of the bay and many choose to avoid fishing altogether when the winds are gusty. According to those surveyed, 16 individuals (70 percent) said they made between 18 and 24 trips

per month. Three individuals said they made between 12 and 15 trips per month (13 percent) and another four individuals (17 percent) said they went fishing everyday, weather and equipment permitting.

Table 9 illustrates the variability of returns for two members of the inshore fishing fleet. Ramon and Moreno are two Luperón *yola* boat owners who normally fish with one other crew member. Ramon prefers to spend the majority of his time using long-lines fishing for red snapper, grouper, hinds, and sea bass at the edge of the inshore reef where it drops steeply down to great depths. Initially, Moreno only fished the waters of the Bahía de Gracias using a *chinchorro* during the first six months of 1989 because he said his boat was not seaworthy. In July of 1989 he spent two weeks replacing the hull and caulking his *yola* after receiving a loan from one of the local intermediaries and repairing his boat so that it was capable of withstanding the rigors of fishing the ocean waters off the coast of Luperón. From August 1989 until the end of the year Moreno also spent several days each week fishing with long lines for red snapper and grouper. Both Moreno and Ramon took advantage of the pelagic schools of mackerel swimming along the coast of Luperón in November and harvested large quantities of these fish using jigs made of tin foil and hooks during the week of November 19-25, 1989.

Moreno's returns in the beginning months of the year were quite low in relation to the number of trips he made per week. Using a *chinchorro* in the bay waters produces highly variable results. In the weeks I recorded the returns for both Moreno and Ramon during the beginning of 1989 Moreno had miserable luck, catching absolutely nothing during 3 trips in the week 2/19 -2/25/89 and only 49 pounds of second- and third-class fish on the other two trips. His luck was not always so bad; during one trip in late February he caught a total of 83 pounds in only three hours of work. Moreno made more trips per week than Ramon, averaging 4.8 trips per week compared to Ramon's 4 trips. However, Ramon preferred to spend most of his time long-lining in



Table 9: Examples of Fishing Returns for Two Inshore Fishermen in lbs. per species.

| <u>Name &amp; Date</u>          | <u>Trips per Week</u> | <u>Total Weekly Harvest</u> | <u>1st Class Species</u> | <u>2nd Class Species</u> | <u>3rd Class Species</u> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Ramon<br>2/19/89-<br>2/25/89    | 3                     | 88                          | 28                       | 24                       | 36                       |
| Moreno<br>2/19/89-<br>2/25/89   | 5                     | 49                          | -                        | 18                       | 31                       |
| Ramon<br>4/9/89-<br>4/15/89     | 5                     | 123                         | 34                       | 42                       | 47                       |
| Moreno<br>4/9/89-<br>4/15/89    | 4                     | 68                          | -                        | 22                       | 46                       |
| Ramon<br>6/18/89-<br>6/24/89    | 3                     | 59                          | 13                       | 22                       | 24                       |
| Moreno<br>6/18/89-<br>6/24/89   | 4                     | 78                          | -                        | 21                       | 57                       |
| Ramon<br>8/13/89-<br>8/19/89    | 5                     | 83                          | 31                       | 17                       | 35                       |
| Moreno<br>8/13/89-<br>8/19/89   | 6                     | 153                         | 28                       | 23                       | 102                      |
| Ramon<br>11/19/89-<br>11/25/89  | 4                     | 189                         | 33                       | 38                       | 118                      |
| Moreno<br>11/19/89-<br>11/25/89 | 5                     | 219                         | -                        | 54                       | 165                      |

Note: 1st class species are defined as lobster, conch, and red snapper.  
 2nd class species are defined as any type of the grouper, sea bass, or hind.  
 Other species harvested include mackerel, shark, other snappers and  
 assorted reef fish which command the lowest market price per pound.

the deep waters near the reef drop-off and made less trips per week due to unfavorable weather conditions. Ramon only used his *chinchorro* in the bay when several days of bad weather prohibited his fishing the deeper waters off the coast.

Table 9 illustrates that catch returns are highly variable for the inshore fishermen. The time of year and the type of harvesting technology employed influence the amount of first, second, or third-class marine species harvested. All inshore fishermen surveyed, both in Cambiaso and Luperón, agreed that the best season for fishing was in late autumn and early winter. From November to February migratory pelagic species are near the coast, grouper and lobster tend to migrate to the shallow waters of the inshore reef during this period, and local fishermen find harvesting these species to be easier due to their increased numbers in the inshore waters. It made no difference if the principal harvesting technique employed by the inshore fishermen was the *chinchorro* (14 individuals), hook and line (6 individuals), or spear-gun (3 individuals); all agreed that the best fishing for the inshore fishing fleet is when both pelagic species and neritic species congregate in the coastal waters off the shores of Luperón.

Those who fish from boats, both members of the offshore fleet and the inshore fleet, consider fishing, by and large, their primary occupation. All members of the offshore fleet said that fishing was their primary source of income (100 percent). All but one of the fishermen in Cambiaso (6 individuals) who used boats to fish said that fishing was their primary occupation. The one exception in Cambiaso considered agricultural work his principal source of income and fishing his secondary occupation which he engaged in whenever wage labor was unavailable. The majority of inshore fishermen in Luperón surveyed (11 individuals) also considered fishing their main occupation. There was only one exception. The one individual who did not say fishing was his primary occupation owned a small land holding which he cultivated. He also fished frequently with a friend who owned a *yola*, diving on the inshore reefs, yet he clearly stated that he was an agriculturalist who liked to fish in his spare time. Perhaps he felt

that as a landowner and agriculturalist people regarded him with more respect than if he claimed he was a fisherman; nevertheless, fishing provided a significant portion of his household's income.

All the offshore and inshore fleet fishermen surveyed showed that alternative occupations are limited. Four members of the offshore fishing fleet (25 percent) said that they had no other regular jobs. Ten individuals (62.5 percent) said that they occasionally would work in a variety of jobs as wage laborers between trips. Two individuals (12.5 percent), both boat captains, said that they also had shops in Puerto Plata which provided secondary incomes (their wives ran the stores while they were at sea). In Cambiaso, the five individuals who claimed fishing as their primary activity said that agricultural wage labor was an important secondary source of income. At specific times of the year they would concentrate on agricultural work (maize harvesting, peanut harvesting, and occasional land clearing) and return to fishing when the terrestrial opportunities became scarce again.

Some members of the inshore fleet in Luperón also worked seasonally as agricultural laborers (5 individuals or 46 percent). Two claimed that fishing was their sole source of income (18 percent) and 4 individuals (36 percent) said that they did odd jobs such as net mending, working as a *motorconcho*, painting houses and repairing roofs, and one individual sold lottery tickets. Nonetheless, it appears that most individuals (94 percent surveyed) who fished from boats, whether as members of the inshore or offshore fishing fleets, considered fishing as their primary occupation.

### The Shore Fisher Folk of Luperón

The shore fisher folk of Luperón cannot be considered as a homogeneous group. The only trait they have in common is that they do not have access to boats and, as such, must limit the range of their harvesting activities either to the littoral zone or the

nearby waters of the inshore reef. Mentioned previously in this chapter is the fact that the shore group is the only category of fisher folk which has women within its ranks. From the point of membership clearly gender is an issue which distinguishes the shore fisher folk from both the inshore and offshore fishermen of Luperón.

There are a few technological harvesting methods not employed by the shore fisher folk due to the fact they have no boats. Like the inshore fishermen, the shore fisher folk do not use air compressors or diving hoses to harvest marine products from the ocean floor, nor do they long line in the deep coastal waters. However, some shore fisher folk do use spear-guns, masks, fins, and snorkels to hunt the inshore reefs, swimming from the shore and diving to harvest various fish and mollusks found in the shallow coastal waters. *Chinchorros* are sometimes used by shore fisher folk as described earlier in this chapter to harvest tilapia or mullet in the coastal lagoons or mouths of the *municipio's* rivers. *Atarrayas* are also sometimes employed to capture mullet and bait fish for the hooks of the shore fisher folk's lines when line-casting along the shore line.

One of the main differences between the offshore and inshore fishing fleets and the shore fisher folk is that most of the individuals categorized as being members of the shore fisher folk either fish for subsistence purposes or view fishing as a supplemental income clearly secondary to other occupational specializations. While more will be said about this in the next section of this chapter which deals with local marketing practices of the Luperón fisher folk, it should be stated here that it is these shore fisher folk which provide much of the seafood consumed by tourists in the local restaurants in the town of Luperón. Using limited technology with low capital investment (i.e., not having boats and engines to maintain), and typically having low volume marine yields, these shore fisher folk are not indebted to the local intermediaries and can afford to circumvent their monopoly on the refrigeration storage and transport to the regional wholesale markets. As such, some of these shore fisher folk can afford to sell small



quantities of seafood directly to restaurant owners, fisher vendors, and community members, and by doing so receive higher returns for their products than if they sold to the local intermediaries.

Nevertheless, those individuals who supplemented their incomes by providing fresh seafood to the local restaurants are only a small number of the local shore fisher folk. The majority of members of this group fish mainly for subsistence purposes, to provide a little extra income, and for recreation. M. Estellie Smith has written that if more than 15 percent of a fishing individual's catch is retained for household consumption than he or she can be categorized as "non-exchange" oriented (1977:18).

If one accepts this rather arbitrarily derived figure as a cut-off line, then most of the shore fisher folk in Luperón and all the shore fisher folk of Cambiaso, as well as some of the inshore fishermen of Cambiaso, should be considered as non-exchange oriented. However, of the eleven shore fisher folk surveyed from Luperón and Cambiaso, all said that they sold some of their catch to neighbors, intermediaries, or restaurants whenever they caught species which were in demand by these consumers. This was true particularly during *semana santa* when most households buy fresh fish to consume on Good Friday as custom dictates. During this week many of the shore fisher folk made special fishing trips for the purpose of selling fresh fish to local consumers. Anything considered a "trash" fish (i.e. one that had little or no market value) was consumed by the individual who caught the fish and/or by members of his or her household.

The eleven individuals listed as shore fisher folk were included in the sample because they were seen fishing several times a week in either Cambiaso or Luperón throughout 1989. The people listed as members belonging in the category of shore fisher folk pursued fishing as a weekly occupation within their cycle of normal economic activities. Of the eleven members of the shore fisher folk who were asked what they considered their principal economic activity in terms of income derived,

and/or time spent during a week engaged in this behavior, only three *luperonenses*, two young males and one old woman, said that fishing was their primary economic activity. This meant that only 27 percent of all shore fisher folk surveyed considered fishing their primary economic activity. In Cambiaso, the four respondents all claimed that either farming (1 individual who owned 38 *tareas* of land) or agricultural labor (3 individuals, including the two females) were their primary economic activities.

In Luperón, the respondents who claimed fishing was not their primary economic activity claimed a wide variety of occupations. One individual said he was principally a farmer and owned 18 *tareas* of land on which he cultivated *yuca*, peanuts, and pigeon peas; in addition he worked for INAPA (turning on the water in the town streets). Two others worked as agricultural laborers when work was available, and did a variety of part-time jobs in the town (painting buildings, simple construction work, hauling *cana*, *yagua*, and water on their donkeys) to make ends meet. Finally, the other female in Luperón worked as a member of the world's oldest profession. She said she worked in a *cafetería* part-time, but other informants told me that she had worked as a prostitute in the town for many years and the *cafetería* where she worked only sold drinks and women. She was in her late thirties, poor, and lived with another single woman in a small, two room house with a dirt floor, walls of *yagua* and a *cana* roof. Business must have been difficult with her competing with younger, more comely women for clients, and she was observed fishing with a cast-line from the town dock most week days in the late afternoons. She said that she ate most of what she caught, but sometimes would sell any extra fish to one of the local women who sold cooked fish in the street for U.S. \$0.32 or \$0.48 a pound.

Of the three individuals living in Luperón who claimed that fishing was their primary economic activity more should be explained. The older woman who fished did so on a daily basis. Everyday from about four o'clock in the afternoon until dusk this 61 year old woman could be seen throwing a hand line baited with cut fish and weighted with a

metal nut into the bay from the town dock. She told me that she lived with her youngest daughter and her three young children in a house with three rooms, a dirt floor, *tabla* walls, and a *cana* roof. Her daughter worked in a local *cafetería* cooking and washing dishes for U.S. \$24.00 per month and meals. The old woman fished for food and would sell any extra fish to either the women selling cooked fish on the streets or to neighbors if they wanted any. This was her principal source of income; the U.S. \$1.60–\$3.20 she earned a week fishing helped supplement the meager salary of her daughter.

The two young men who said fishing was their primary economic activity, while listed as members of the shore fisher folk because they did not use a boat, were clearly heavily involved in fishing as a monetary enterprise. They worked together as a team. Driving along the shores of the *municipio* on a motorcycle, which one of them owned, they would stop at favorite locations to fish. They both used diving masks, spear-guns, snorkels, and fins to scour the inshore reefs and the bay for lobster, conch, octopus, grouper, sea bass, and any other first or second-class fish. These two individuals had exclusive connections with three of the local tourist restaurants to supply fresh fish and mollusks whenever caught. Lobster, conch, grouper, and sea bass were always bought immediately by one of the three competing restaurants at a price much higher than what any of the local intermediaries paid. These young men also sold some fish to other *cafeterías* in town and to the local intermediaries, but the best of their catch always went to these three restaurants for top price. On the side, as a secondary economic activity, the owner of the motorcycle worked as a *motorconcho* and the other young man helped in one of the pool halls during the evenings. Both of them told me that more than three quarters of their income came from fishing. Weekly earnings were highly variable but both of them told me that during one week in February 1989 they earned around U.S. \$34.00 a piece from fishing. While this does not sound like a lot of money, the man working in the pool hall only earned U.S. \$7.00

for working five nights a week, five hours a night, racking the tables, policing the premises, and collecting fees from the players.

In terms of secondary activities both the women respondents in Cambiaso claimed that fishing was their second most important economic activity. Both these women were observed working with men harvesting tilapia and mullet with a *chinchorro* in the Lorán river. In addition, then spent considerable time gathering *burgao* on the rocks along the coast line. These shellfish were cleaned and either sold to the only intermediary in Cambiaso for U.S. \$0.48 a pound or eaten by their families. They also line fished off the coastal rocks. If anything was caught which would command a good market price it was sold to the intermediary; otherwise, most of the third-class fish caught were consumed by family members since, in Cambiaso, there was almost no demand by the inhabitants for fresh seafood which anyone could harvest with relative ease.

The two male shore fishermen in Cambiaso did not consider fishing as an important secondary economic activity. The one man who owned 38 *tareas* supplemented his income by working as an agricultural laborer for a large landowner tending his cattle and harvesting his crops. The other male claimed that raising fighting roosters for the cock-fighting ring and betting on these fights provided more income than his fishing activities. Nevertheless, this man was seen fishing with his two sons from the rocky coast on many occasions during 1989 and the local intermediary bought fish from this individual almost every week according to the fishmonger. It was obvious that fishing provided, if not a major source of income for his household, at least an important, albeit tertiary, portion of the household's income and food. In Luperón, the majority of shore fisher folk who did not consider fishing a primary economic activity did consider it of secondary importance to the household income. All four of these individuals stated that fishing provided the second largest portion of income earned during the course of a year.



One thing that the majority of these shore fisher folk had in common was that they were quite poor even by *luperonense* standards. Apart from the two individuals who owned the 38 and 18 *tareas* of land respectively, no other shore fisher folk owned any holdings other than the plot where their homes stood. The two young spear-gun fishermen lived with their parents and owned no land or livestock. The other nine individuals included in the group of shore fisher folk all lived in their own houses, the majority of them simple residences. In Cambiaso, all fisher folk lived in homes without electricity (only three of the rich landowners owned private generators) and used latrines. The individual with the 38 *tareas* of land lived in the only house with a cement floor, *tabla* walls, and a zinc roof. He also lived slightly inland from the beach of Cambiaso where the rest of the poor Cambiaso inhabitants squatted on government land. The other three shore fisher folk in Cambiaso lived in this beach squatter community in houses with dirt floors, *yagua* (2 individuals) or *tabla* walls (1 individual), and *cana* thatch roofs. All of these houses had only two rooms, except for the small landowner whose house had three rooms. Two of these individuals had radios, but none of them had either televisions or refrigerators. The small farmer owned several pigs and chickens and the other male Cambiaso shore fisherman owned a number of chickens he raised for cockfighting, but the two female shore fisher folk in Cambiaso owned no animals.

In Luperón, the five individuals who owned their own houses did not live in a much more affluent manner than their Cambiaso counterparts. The houses of the two female *luperonense* shore fisher folk were already described as being simple, dirt floor, structures. The three male shore fishermen lived in houses which at least had cement floors. One individual had a house with *tabla* walls and a zinc roof. One lived in a house with *tabla* walls and a *cana* thatch roof, while the third lived in a house with *yagua* walls and a *cana* roof. All these homes used latrines for sanitation purposes. While all the homes had electricity, neither of the female shore fisher folk households in

Luperón had a radio, television, telephone, or refrigerators. All three of the men had radios in their houses. One man also had a television, but none had telephones by the end of November 1989. None of the women had any livestock. One of the *luperonense* men owned a pig which he kept in his backyard as an investment. This man also owned a donkey, as did one of the other *luperonense* male shore fishermen.

The two young spear-gun fishermen in Luperón were able to earn a fair income fishing, but they also did not yet have the additional expenses of supporting a household. Even the small farmer in Cambiaso who fished did so to help make ends meet because his 38 *tareas* and additional wage labor was not sufficient to provide for himself, his wife and their four children. The rest of the individuals fished for food and a little extra cash because they were poor, fishing as an activity was inexpensive, and the activity could be adapted to the scheduling needs any other economic opportunity which came along might impose.

#### Changing Marketing Patterns in the Face of Increased Demand: Providing Seafood Delicacies to the North Coast Tourist

The growth of tourism along the north coast of the Dominican Republic has produced a much larger demand for fresh seafood delicacies than during the early and mid-1970s before development in this industry had occurred in the region. During conversations with several of the oldest individuals working in two of the large fish markets in Puerto Plata, it was related to me that before the international airport opened in the early 1980s and large numbers of tourists came to the region, most of the fish caught was consumed locally in the communities where it was harvested. At that time only small quantities were transported to the urban centers such as Puerto Plata and much of the seafood was cleaned, frozen, and then shipped to Puerto Rico or the mainland United States.

Today this is not the case. The urban fish markets are doing a thriving business supplying the needs of local restaurants and hotels whose principal clientele are tourists. This increased demand for fresh seafood fueled by the presence of tourists has also resulted in an expansion of the north coast offshore fishing fleet and it is these offshore fishermen who supply the largest proportion of the seafood sold in the urban fish markets of Puerto Plata. Intermediaries arriving in trucks from rural coastal communities along the north coast of the country supply the rest of what is sold in Puerto Plata. Workers in the largest fish markets said that local inshore fishermen either sell directly to small hotels and restaurants, or they sell fish on an individual basis to the inhabitants of Puerto Plata. Workers quickly went on to warn me that fish bought from local inshore fishermen was almost never kept on ice like the fish sold in the fish market and that even a few hours in the hot weather could spoil the meat resulting in contaminated fish.

The five urban fishmongers interviewed gave rough estimates to the amount of seafood which were sold to various regional, national, and international consumers. From Puerto Plata, only a small percentage of the fish and mollusks harvested in the area is air freighted outside the country. Red snapper, lobster, conch, and grouper is shipped to buyers in the United States, but all five fishmongers interviewed told me that this constituted less than 10 percent of all fish brought to the large urban markets from outlying communities. Estimates varied, but from 10 to 25 percent of the total amount of fish sold in the market place went to buyers from supermarkets and restaurants in inland urban centers such as Santiago de los Caballeros, La Vega, Moca, Mao, and San Francisco de Macorís. Again, lobster, snapper, grouper, sea bass, conch, and octopus were favored by these retail buyers. Small fish stores supplying the urban population of Puerto Plata and individuals buyers from the community purchased another minor percentage of the total seafood sales estimated from a low of 5 percent to a high of 10

percent. This left somewhere between 60 to 75 percent of all sales going to meet the demand supplied by the local tourist market.

In the two largest fish markets in Puerto Plata called the *pesquerías* Cachita and Pesquamar buyers from many of the large local hotels were observed mornings ordering fresh seafood for their restaurants. Lobster, red snapper, conch, and grouper were the items in highest demand by these buyers. Smaller orders of octopus, various types of sea bass and hinds, shark, and tuna were also observed being bought. Several hotel buyers coming from various resorts in the Playa Dorada enclave outside of Puerto Plata, Jack Tar Village, Hotel Montemar, as well as smaller restaurants and hotels, were seen purchasing seafood from these urban fish markets. On one Monday morning visit to the Cachita fish market I observed several large tanks of live lobsters which held collectively, according to one of the fishmongers, over 350 pounds of lobster being emptied over the course of three hours.

In both markets informants told me that special arrangements were made with buyers from the largest tourist resorts to reserve quantities of the most desired seafood for them on a daily basis. Even such arrangements do not guarantee specialty items such as lobsters are always available. In August 1989 Puerto Plata fish markets suffered from a shortage of lobsters. The biggest buyers received less than was needed, other buyers received none, and the price per pound for lobster reached a record high that year in the market of U.S. \$5.40 a pound.

The fish eaten at the Luperón Beach Resort hotel came from Puerto Plata. Both the Cachita and Pesquamar were locations where the hotel buyers purchased supplies. Both the food buyer and the director of the hotel told me that the quantity needed by the hotel of the first- and second-class marine species could only be supplied reliably by the large central fish markets in Puerto Plata. Supplies of certain prime species available from the two intermediaries in Luperón were too erratic to be used. Thus, one had the paradoxical situation observed by me whereby a *yola* captain was diving off the beach



off the enclave resort hotel and was being photographed by tourists when he came to the surface with a large lobster in the early morning. This fisherman later sold the lobster to one of the local intermediaries in the town of Luperón. In the early morning of the next day the intermediary went to Puerto Plata and sold all his fish and mollusks at the Cachita fish market. Later the same morning the truck from the Luperón Beach Resort arrived at the Cachita market and the buyer purchased lobsters, red snapper, grouper, and conch for the hotel kitchens. I do not know if the same lobster caught off the beach the day before returned to Luperón with the hotel's purchases, but that evening it might have been the case that the tourist who photographed the fishermen harvesting the lobster the day before sat down to a lobster dinner in the main restaurant and ate the same lobster he saw being caught. The lobster would have traveled over 80 kilometers by that time and its value had gone up from U.S. \$2.55 per pound to U.S. \$19.00 (the price for a lobster dinner in the hotel in August 1989).

Distinctions have already been made in this chapter between the harvesting methods of the offshore, inshore, and shore fisher folk of Luperón. They also exhibit different marketing patterns and obtain substantial variation in prices paid for their marine harvest as a result. Comparatively, it will be shown in this section that while both the offshore and inshore fishermen benefit from an increased demand for their products due to the introduction of tourism on the north coast, it is the nonfishing boat owner and intermediary who gain the lion's share of economic benefits derived from the growth of tourism. For reasons mentioned previously, such as ownership of the offshore fishing fleet, local refrigeration technology, and motorized transportation to the urban markets, these individuals can afford to "buy cheap and sell dear."

The offshore fishermen have already been described as members of the wage-earning proletariat. Except for the captains of the fishing boats and the divers, all other crew members get paid a set wage per trip made. Even the captains and divers only divide a small share of the net profit from each voyage, while the nonfishing owners

receive between 66 and 75 percent of the net profit on each voyage. The only *luperonense* captain boat-owner also sold his catch in the urban fish markets of Puerto Plata and paid the other diver on his boat 15 percent of the net profit for each trip, while the other crew members were paid a wage. Naturally, the boat owners have to pay for equipment and boat maintenance which is expensive, but the profits derived from these vessels are substantial, otherwise it is likely that they would invest in less risky business ventures.

In Table 10 are listed the prices obtained for various marine species from different buyers during the month of November 1989. As one can see, the prices obtained in the urban fish markets of Puerto Plata are substantially higher than those offered by the intermediaries in Cambiaso, Luperón, or even the prices paid by restaurant owners in Luperón. The intermediaries of Luperón can make 100 percent profit on such species such as grouper, conch, and sea bass by transporting their fish to the urban markets of Puerto Plata. Even after deducting the cost of labor, gas, and ice the profit earned by these fish intermediaries is handsome. The profit earned by the sole intermediary in Cambiaso is even greater. For driving an extra 12 kilometers and spending an additional one hour of his time, this individual makes anywhere from 100 to 250 percent profit on the seafood he purchases from the fishermen in the village.

According to Table 10, the restaurants in Luperón purchase their seafood at rates anywhere from one to three pesos over the prices offered by the local intermediaries. Why do the local fishermen not sell directly to these restaurants? In part, because local demand has not yet exceeded supply. While local supplies of lobster could all be utilized by local restaurants during most times of the year, during the off tourist seasons fishermen would have a limited market. Also, most third-class species of seafood are not desired by tourists, so there is no local demand for these fish aside from the small amount required by community members. Finally, local restaurateurs are not in the business of loaning money to fishermen for making repairs on their boats, nets, and

other equipment necessary for day to day operations, while local intermediaries fulfill this vital function.

Table 10: Marine Commodities Prices in U.S. \$ Paid According to Location Sold.

| <u>Seafood Type</u> | <u>Cambiaso Intermediary</u> | <u>Luperón Intermediary</u> | <u>Luperón Restaurants</u> | <u>Urban Fish Market</u> |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Grouper             | \$0.48                       | \$0.80                      | \$1.28                     | \$1.75                   |
| Lobster             | \$1.90                       | \$2.55                      | \$2.87                     | \$4.14                   |
| Conch*              | \$0.80                       | \$1.10                      | \$1.43                     | \$2.23                   |
| Octopus             | \$0.80                       | \$1.10                      | \$1.28                     | \$1.90                   |
| Sea bass            | \$0.40                       | \$0.64                      | \$1.04                     | \$1.43                   |
| Red snapper         | \$0.80                       | \$1.04                      | \$1.43                     | \$1.90                   |
| Squirrel fish       | \$0.48                       | \$1.04                      | \$1.43                     | \$1.75                   |
| Mackerel            | \$0.32                       | \$0.40                      | ..n/a..                    | \$0.64                   |
| Burgao*             | \$0.48                       | ..n/a..                     | \$1.19                     | ..n/a..                  |

\*The *burgao* is taken from its shell and cleaned which is a laborious chore. This represents the price only for the processed meat. Conch is also sold out of its shell.

Most of the inshore fishermen in Luperón and Cambiaso are in debt to the local intermediaries and are required as part of the loan agreement to sell all their marine harvest, or at least all the first- and second-class species, to the intermediary who has made the loan. Of the 23 inshore fishermen interviewed in Cambiaso (6) and Luperón (17) in November 1989, only two in Cambiaso and seven in Luperón said they did not owe any money at present to the local intermediaries. All of these individuals were members of the boat crews and not the *yola* owners. In Cambiaso one of the *yolas* is owned by the intermediary and he lets individuals rent the boat for fishing at the price of one-half of all that is harvested. This, plus the fact the fishermen must sell to the intermediary because he has a monopoly on the storage and transportation technology, makes the Cambiaso intermediary an extremely powerful individual who can set prices at low rates with relative impunity.

All the inshore boat owners owed money at some time to the local intermediaries during 1989. They told me that even when they did not owe money to the

intermediaries it was still important to maintain good relationships with these men because one never knew when a loan would be necessary for boat or equipment repairs. None of the boat owners in Cambiaso and only three of the *yola* owners sold some of their seafood on occasion to the local restaurant owners.

During August 1989 two of the Luperón boat owners told me that they made some sales of red snapper and lobster to two of the restaurant owners because the demand was so high due to the large numbers of English tourists eating at these establishments. At the time the prices offered by the restaurateurs was double what the two local intermediaries were paying per pound. They still sold some of their red snapper and lobster to the local intermediaries to keep them friendly and sold the rest secretly to the restaurant owners. The restaurant owners had to buy additional supplies from the intermediaries at a much higher rate (equivalent to the rate in the urban market of Puerto Plata) because local demand was high. The two individuals were taking a risk because if the intermediaries discovered their direct business deals with the restaurants they might have refused any future credit or declined to purchase any fish from these individuals, effectively destroying their livelihoods. The power of the intermediaries over the lives of the local inshore fishermen is developed by forming debt obligations and having a monopoly of the local market. Without the goodwill of the local intermediaries many inshore fishermen could not afford to function.

### Conclusions: Tourism and Local Fisher Folk

In this chapter the harvesting and marketing patterns of the local fishermen of Luperón were discussed. The life of the average fisher folk, whether a member of the offshore, inshore, or shore group, is one of austerity and hard work. The individuals involved in fishing as an economic activity in Luperón do so in part because they are poor, have few other economic alternatives, and come from family backgrounds where



fishing has been practiced as an economic activity for several generations. Many enjoy the activity and are proud of their maritime skills, but most agree that fishing is a poorly paid and hazardous activity.

The lion's share of the profit derived from the fishing industry is accrued, not by the fisher folk themselves, but by those individuals who are engaged in the marketing of the seafood at the local and regional levels. These individuals are the nonfishing boat owners of the offshore fishing fleet and the local intermediaries in Cambiaso and Luperón. It is because they control the refrigerated storage facilities and the transportation to the urban markets that allows them to reap the majority of profit from the labor of the local fisher folk. The process of fisheries development in the Dominican Republic has expanded the traditional fishing zones to include the offshore banks, but the price for expanding the range of the fishing fleets has resulted in the creation of an offshore fishing fleet which is controlled chiefly by nonfishing entrepreneurs.

The members of the offshore fishing fleet are chiefly members of the wage earning Dominican proletariat. This is a pattern similar to those observed elsewhere in the Caribbean (c.f. Epple 1977; Acheson 1981). Marketing is also being transformed by the increased mechanization of fishing in the Dominican Republic. In Luperón, the offshore fishermen have bypassed the local middlemen and are selling their catch directly to wholesalers in the large urban markets of Puerto Plata. This supports the theory of Forman and Riegelhaupt that market restructuring occurs as shifts from subsistence to commercial production occurs in a region (Forman and Riegelhaupt 1970:189).

In Luperón, this period of transition is not yet complete. The town middlemen specializing in selling seafood still dominate the marketing of the local inshore fishermen. However, the local middlemen are also shifting the marketing of the local catch to the large urban centers where higher prices can be obtained per pound. Thus,

the local middlemen are earning greater profits, but the local fishermen are still forced to accept the low prices per pound set by the middlemen in the community. While demand for their catch has increased due to greater consumption, in part fueled by regional tourism, real earnings for local fishermen have not increased significantly.

The only exceptions to this rule are the shore fisher folk who do not rely on the goodwill of the local intermediaries to pay for lost or broken equipment and the one Luperón offshore boat owner and captain who also owns a truck and transports his catch directly to the markets in Puerto Plata. The two young shore fishermen who dive and harvest marine species for the local restaurants directly benefit from the increased demand for fresh seafood that local tourism has sponsored. They are partially supporting themselves by working to meet the needs of the small community tourist businesses. Nevertheless, they still have secondary occupations to supplement their incomes during periods of scarcity or when a slump in the local tourist industry reduces demand for seafood.

The other fisher folk, whether offshore, inshore, or shore group members, only indirectly benefit from the increased demand tourism has produced for their products at a regional level. Debt obligations, fear of alienated those intermediaries who control the distribution system, and lack of storage facilities, keep local fisher folk from benefiting directly from the increased demand for fresh seafood generated by the growth of regional tourism. This increased demand for fresh seafood and a corresponding increase in the numbers of offshore fishing boats will also run the risk of environmental degradation of existing marine stocks.

Many of the older inshore fishermen told me that conch, lobster, grouper, and octopus are becoming increasingly difficult to find. There is a real risk that short term profits in the fishing industry, promoted by increased demand in meeting tourist culinary desires, will destroy existing stocks and ruin any chances for long term maintenance of this industry. Sustained yield fishing has not yet been introduced into

the vocabulary of the north coast fisher folk of the Dominican Republic and even those regulations limiting harvesting of species at certain times of the year such as lobster, conch, and turtles were overlooked regularly in 1989. The low salaries paid to the local fisheries inspectors and other officials responsible for enforcing environmental laws makes some of these individuals susceptible to bribes and inducements to "look the other way." The future of the inshore fishery and the livelihood of the artisanal Dominican fisher folk appears to have a questionable long-term future.

Few fishermen in the community have yet been able to directly benefit from the creation of a local tourism industry. In 1989, only three individuals who had been former fishermen worked for the Luperón Beach Resort hotel. One individual was hired by the hotel to manage the resort dock and take hotel tourists for boat rides in the Bahía de Gracias. He was paid national minimum wage and said he enjoyed the regular hours and security of his position. Nevertheless, he still owned his own *yola* and went fishing several nights a week. The other two former fishermen who worked for the hotel were young men (16 and 18 years old respectively) who had helped as crew members of the inshore fleet but did not own their own boats. They worked for the beach activities manager putting sail boats in the water, handling the hotel's diving boat, and making sure that guests returned snorkeling equipment intact. They told me that working at the hotel paid more than they could earn fishing.

When I returned to the community in 1992, the older man who had run the hotel dock and bay cruise in 1989 had returned to working as a member of the inshore fishing fleet. The hotel management had discontinued this recreational activity due to its low profit margin and he had been laid-off. The two young men still were working as beach activities personnel and were still content in their jobs, even though like most employees they said they would have liked to see an increase in their salaries. As will be discussed in the next chapter, work at the hotel is viewed by many members of the

community as desirable because of the high salaries offered relative to comparable work in the town and the attendant benefits a job at the resort offers.



CHAPTER SIX  
ENTERTAINING THE GOLDEN HORDE:  
COMMUNITY RESISTANCE AND SOCIAL  
TRANSFORMATION IN THE FACE OF TOURISM

Sunday Evening at Armando's

The sun had just set and the Sunday evening promised to be a warm one. Armando was placing candles at each table of his outdoor restaurant to create an ambiance more attractive to the tourists who would soon be arriving in taxis from the hotel just outside of town. A group of six English tourists, who had walked to town in the late afternoon to shop for tourist goods and do some sightseeing, already sat at one of the tables drinking beer and *cuba libres* (rum and cokes). They were in a jolly mood, having imbibed several drinks, and were watching the street scenes of a typical *luperonense* Sunday evening unfold before them.

The town band was playing a fractured version of the Dominican national anthem in the central plaza signaling the end of the weekly concert. The band's enthusiasm in their individual playing outweighed their desire for unified harmony and the concert ended not on a single beat, but rather faded away in the space of several musical bars. Pretty young girls in their Sunday best promenaded together towards the central plaza where they would walk around flirting with the groups of young men who, also wearing their best clothes, congregated together by the various park benches.

One of the English woman sitting at the restaurant remarked on how clean all the clothes of the Dominican promenaders were and wondered how the women in town

managed to clean everything so nicely by hand. Ian, one of the English tourists, made the observation that elbow grease was still the best method of getting spots out of clothes. Mary, his wife, said, "what would you know about washing clothes, you haven't touched any dirty laundry since you were married." Ian said jokingly, "just watch what you say or I might trade you in for one of these pretty young Dominican girls who mind their men's needs without complaint."

Several hours have passed and Armando's restaurant is full of English tourists eating and drinking. Laughter erupts from various tables to peal out into the surrounding streets. Taxis are traveling to and from the resort loaded with tourists five and six to a car who pool their resources and double up to pay the U.S. \$8.00 round-trip cab fare. Young *luperonense* juveniles and children are lined up around the outside fence of Armando's looking in at the carousing tourists and watching with wide eyes the large plates of lobster, fish, beef, and chicken being delivered to the various tables. For some of these children the food on one tourist's plate represents more meat than they would eat in two months. They stand mesmerized by the sight of such opulence.

A kindhearted tourist spots the young children standing by the fence and tells the waitress to give them all cups of soft drinks and place it on his bill. The faces of the children light up when the refreshments arrive. Another tourist, sitting at the table next to the kindhearted man, red faced from the sun and plenty of liquor, leans over and says "just you watch, people like you will spoil this place yet. Soon they will be all clamoring for handouts." His comments are ignored politely and he turns back to his raucous companions.

Late that evening the last tourists are slowly embarking in the waiting taxis for the journey back to the hotel. Drunken individuals are being helped by companions towards the waiting cars and several of the tourists are shouting to Armando "*hasta mañana*." Two of Armando's waitresses are shaking hands and quietly palming tips received in the quiet touching of hands. These tips will not be shared with the owner or

kitchen staff. Several male customers demand hugs and kisses which are playfully avoided by the waitresses.

On the street a group of young town boys dressed in ragged shorts and shirts approach every group of tourists leaving the restaurant with their palms extended saying the only English words they know, "give me one dollar." Many of the tourists give them their loose change or a few peso bills. The tourist who warned the kindhearted man against buying the refreshments for the young children earlier in the night is well into his cups. When approached by these boys he tells them to "bugger off." Not understanding the words, but familiar with the tone, they back off and wait quietly until he is deposited into a taxi with his equally besotted companions. As his taxi leaves the boys return to panhandling the final group of tourists approaching their taxis.

After the last tourist has left, the boys total the evening contributions. Forty-nine pesos divided by four means that each one will get U.S. \$1.95. For young Carlito, the leader of the group, this is a great windfall. He was orphaned last year when his mother was electrocuted in a freak accident and his grandfather, with whom he lives, is too old and feeble to work. His work as a shoe-shine boy provides the only regular income for himself and his grandfather, but the small amount of money he earns daily means that they both eat poorly and infrequently. But not tomorrow. Tomorrow, thanks to the tourists, Carlito and his grandfather will have some chicken in their rice and beans. "To eat meat, what a luxury," he thinks.

Carlito is pleased that he had finally gotten enough courage to ask tourists for money. He was afraid at first, but the money he has been earning recently begging is more than he makes most days shining shoes. Besides, tourists are all rich and he is so poor. The little money the tourists give him means little to them, but to him it means survival. Carlito believes that if his grandfather does not eat more good things he will die and then he will be left alone in the world. For Carlito, begging is just another method of survival.

The Resort and the Vacationers: Disfrutando al máximo  
at the Luperón Beach Resort

Tourists coming to stay at the Luperón Beach Resort are frequently amazed at its relative isolation. There is no mention in the resort brochure that it is the only international resort in a thirty kilometer radius. Tourists, traveling an hour by bus over poorly paved secondary roads after long flights from overseas, finally enter the town of Luperón with a sigh of relief. By this time some of the newly arrived tourists are beginning to wonder what type of place they are going to, while others are in quite a state of discomfort due to distended bladders. Finally, to the great relief of most passengers, the bus turns off the dirt paved road onto an asphalt covered two lane street bordered by flowers whose entrance is blocked by a guard-house spanning the width of the two lanes and manned by armed guards. The tourist bus is waved through without slowing down. This is the entrance to the Ciudad Marina enclave resort; the tourists are ready to begin their holiday as guests at the Luperón Beach Resort hotel.

In 1989, the Luperón Beach Resort hotel was the only commercial enterprise open within the Ciudad Marina enclave complex. Plans on paper indicated that future growth within the enclave would include another, larger hotel to be called the Hotel de Cerro, private villas and condominiums, shops, tennis courts, a golf course, a large marina, and an amphitheater. Five "model" villas were complete and ready to be sold in 1989, but none were purchased during the year. Financing problems have delayed the start of the second hotel and by early 1993 work had not yet begun. A small marina was operational in 1989, but by 1992 it had ceased to be operational and the dock was in disrepair. In 1989, the golf course touted in the Luperón Beach Resort hotel brochure as an 18 hole course designed by Pete Dye was little more than patches of green with flags surrounded by the roughest "rough" a golfer would ever encounter. By 1992, the course had transformed back into pasture fit for little more than grazing cattle.



Big plans were changed immediately in the minds of tourists arriving with golf bags slung over their shoulders. However, at least the Luperón Beach Resort hotel accommodations were up to the standards advertised in the brochures. The Luperón Beach Resort hotel, with its 160 rooms (while 310 rooms are advertised in its brochure, the majority had not yet been completed in 1989), is presently the only international class hotel in the immediate area surrounding the town of Luperón. Located on the Atlantic coast side of a small peninsula jutting into the Bahía de Gracias and the ocean, the hotel itself was sparkling clean and well maintained in 1989, having only been open for a little more than a year. Guests have the choice of staying in 96 junior suites, which include a bedroom, bar/T.V. room, balcony and bath, or in two-bedroom apartments which also are composed of two bedrooms, bar/T.V. room, balcony, and bath. All accommodations are air-conditioned and each suite, or apartment, is furnished with a color television, refrigerator, and hot running water (a convenience found only in Dominican luxury hotels).

Horseback riding, wind surfing, sunfish sailing, snorkeling, volleyball, and tennis are all free of charge to hotel guests for day activities. Entertainment in the evenings includes dining in one of the hotel's two restaurants, nightly dance shows or games sponsored by the activities staff, and a discotheque down near the beach. For an additional fee tourists can make special day trips to Puerto Plata and Sósea featuring either shopping and sun bathing, or evening trips to a fine restaurant and a casino/discotheque in Puerto Plata. For the fishing enthusiast deep sea fishing was available in 1989 by charter at the cost of U.S. \$56.00 per person, minimum party of four, for a half-day trip along the coastal waters of Luperón.

For those individuals interested in learning about Dominican rural life, or just spending the day drinking and sightseeing, in 1989 there was the day-long Bushwhacker Jeep Tour. This tour was a combination "booze-cruise" and educational experience designed to show visitors how local Dominicans lived. Tourists would

travel in a large Toyota Land Cruiser and visit a cheese factory, a *conuco* where local crops would be shown, travel to Cambiaso for a *comida típica* (a meal featuring Dominican cuisine) consisting of rice and beans, chicken, and salad. They would be serenaded by a local band playing merengues and then go donkey riding on the sandy beach to a spot where they could go swimming and sunbathing for an hour. While on the road, the tour guide would talk about making a living in the rural areas, Dominican housing, and local customs and folk beliefs. The guide would also make sure that all patrons were supplied with any beverage they desired from the cooler throughout the day. Many tourists said that this jeep tour was the only excursion available at the hotel which educated foreign visitors about Dominican lifeways. Whether it was the alcoholic beverages or the learning experience, I can testify, having designed the informational component of the tour and working as a tour guide for this enterprise, that customer satisfaction was high for this recreational experience. Repeat customers were not a rarity on this tour, even though the price per individual was U.S. \$44.50.

The Luperón Beach Resort also housed several shops which paid the hotel administration rent for the right to conduct business on their premises. There were several shops which sold Dominican souvenirs. There was a shop selling fine hand-made apparel. A shop to rent motorcycles and motor-scooters was located in the hotel, as well as a hand-painted T-shirt business. A small currency exchange booth which exchanged U.S., Canadian, and German currency into Dominican pesos was available (this shop did not exchange Dominican pesos into any foreign currency, nor did most Dominican banking establishments). At the end of August 1989, the hotel management opened a large convenience store in the hotel selling soft drinks, liquor, cigarettes, cigars, candy, sun screen, tooth paste, and other tourist consumer items in response to community competition. More will be said about this later in this chapter.

The resort employed 116 *luperonenses* during the peak winter tourist season from January to April 1989. Seasonal lay-offs of approximately 30 local workers occurred

for a month during May and again during the off-season autumn month of November (there were only 84 guests at the resort during the last week of November). All the hotel workers "laid-off" during these slow months were asked to go on unpaid leave and were rehired immediately when business increased. The hotel's policy of hiring only one member of each nuclear family limited employment possibilities for community members, but ensured that hotel jobs were dispersed among many families.

The majority of the local workers worked in such occupational roles as waiters/waitresses, kitchen help, maids, bell-hops, grounds-keepers, and security guards. Only three *luperonenses* were clerks in hotel shops and two others were members of the hotel activities staff. While several *luperonenses* held low level supervisory positions on the hotel staff, during the period of my investigation all higher administrative positions at the resort were filled by people brought in from elsewhere in the Dominican Republic.

All waiters/waitresses, bell-hops, bartenders, and chamber maids had to attend a formal training course before being hired by the hotel management. Prior to 1987, such courses were offered only in Puerto Plata, but in 1987 and 1988 training courses were offered at the Luperón high school sponsored by INFRATUR (Ministry of Tourism). These courses were taught by personnel certified by INFRATUR and individuals had to pay to attend. A few poorer individuals in town were given scholarships to take these courses, but the majority who attended paid for the training with their own money. After the four week course individuals received diplomas showing that they were certified waiters/waitresses, bartenders, chamber maids, etc. After 1989, a private tourism employment certification school in Luperón owned by an INFRATUR certified teacher offered courses only to individuals who could pay the matriculation fees. The courses sponsored by INFRATUR in 1987 and 1988 were the only times the national government actively promoted involvement in the tourism industry by community members. No town meetings or business forums detailing how local entrepreneurs

could benefit from local tourism were ever held in Luperón before or after the construction of the Ciudad Marina tourist enclave.

Wages at the hotel, while only slightly above legal minimum wage, were high by local standards. Dominican law does not require employers who have fewer than ten employees to meet national minimum wage requirements. Luperón Beach Resort hotel employees had to be paid the legal minimum wage; however, most employers in the secondary tourist shops and restaurants in the town of Luperón were exempt from this statute because of the few workers they employed. Waiters and waitresses working at the hotel in November 1989 earned U.S. \$103.50 per month, plus a percentage of the gratuities. Those who worked in similar positions in the town of Luperón earned between U.S. \$19.10–\$31.85 per month and a percentage of the gratuities. Hotel workers usually worked eight hour shifts, while in town waiters and waitresses were expected to work between ten and twelve hours per day. A job at the hotel was considered desirable by many of the poorer *luperonenses*; the high wages (in the local context) and the hotel's proximity to the town were cited by many local respondents as the main factors for wanting to work at the hotel. It was noted when I returned to Luperón in 1992 that many of the individuals who had worked at the resort in 1989 were still hotel employees. Many of my hotel employee informants told me that apart from moving to urban centers such as Puerto Plata or Santo Domingo and finding work at tourist resorts in these locations, the wages and benefits available as employees at the Luperón Beach Resort hotel far exceeded anything employers in the town of Luperón would offer. Sick pay, paid maternity leave, and retirement benefits were not offered by any town employers except to full-time employees of the national government.



### The Tourists

The majority of the tourists coming to stay at the Luperón Beach Resort in 1989, were, borrowing from Erik Cohen's typology, best classified in the category of "organized mass tourists" (1972). For the most part these tourists came on package tours originating in Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom. While most of the resort guests came on package tours, the type of tour selected influenced their respective behavior vis-à-vis the host community. Those tourists coming for a relatively short time on an "all-inclusive" package tour, such as the majority of the Canadian guests, whose average stay was one week with a complete meal plan included in the price, had relatively little interaction with the host community. Tourists staying longer than a week, whether or not they had complete meal plans, tended to become restless after a week within the confines of the enclave resort and were more likely to visit the town of Luperón for the occasional meal, to buy souvenirs, or to go sightseeing.

As can be seen in Table 11, Germans, British, and Canadians comprised the majority of guests staying at the resort in 1989 (87 percent). However, there were numerous other nationalities represented among the guests in the Luperón Beach Resort hotel during the course of the year. Citizens from the following countries were found among the guests at the hotel in 1989: Argentina, Austria, Barbados, Canada, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, Trinidad, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Venezuela.

Not all of these tourists were traveling from their home countries. The tourists who were citizens of Barbados and Trinidad were actually residing in Canada and came to Luperón as clients of Regency Tours travel agency. Several of the U.S. citizens also came with Regency Tours. These individuals lived along the U.S. border near Toronto and took advantage of the cheap tour rates offered by this Canadian tour company. Similarly, two Irish citizens took advantage of the cheap fares being offered by

Table 11: Visitor Nationality by Tourist Season at the Luperón Beach Resort in 1989.

| <u>Nationality</u> | <u>Tourist Season</u>                |                                      |                                       |                                     |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|                    | <u>Peak Winter<br/>(1/1 to 4/15)</u> | <u>Off Spring<br/>(4/16 to 6/14)</u> | <u>Peak Summer<br/>(6/15 to 9/15)</u> | <u>Off Fall<br/>(9/16 to 12/31)</u> |
| German             | 41%                                  | 31%                                  | 13%                                   | 24.0%                               |
| Canadian           | 37%                                  | 49%                                  | 18%                                   | 26.5%                               |
| British            | ----                                 | 20%                                  | 58%                                   | 33.5%                               |
| U.S.               | 6%                                   | ----                                 | 3%                                    | 5.0%                                |
| Dominican          | 8%                                   | ----                                 | 2%                                    | 3.5%                                |
| Italian            | 4%                                   | ----                                 | 2%                                    | 2.0%                                |
| Swiss              | 3%                                   | ----                                 | 2%                                    | -----                               |
| Austrian           | ----                                 | ----                                 | ----                                  | 3.5%                                |
| Other              | 1%                                   | ----                                 | 2%                                    | 2.0%                                |
| Total              | 100%                                 | 100%                                 | 100%                                  | 100.0%                              |

AirTours in the United Kingdom during the summer of 1989 and traveled to the Dominican Republic with this agency. The Austrian tourists arriving in Luperón during the autumn months came on package tours flying out of Germany sponsored by TUI tours and Fischer-Riesen tours. The Spanish and Italians guests came with organized package tours but rarely spent more than one night at the resort. They came with bus tour groups that visited the archaeological site of La Isabela, spent the night at the hotel, and moved on the following morning to another Dominican location.

A few individuals came to the Luperón Beach Resort through private, nontour arrangements and visitors were always welcome at the hotel if vacancies existed. Affluent Dominicans came to the resort for weekends and during *semana santa* with friends and family. Dominican nationals were charged lower rates than foreigners. Foreigners not affiliated with a tour company were charged U.S. \$100.00 per day (for double occupancy), while Dominican nationals were charged only U.S. \$40.00 for the

same accommodations. However, the vast majority of hotel guests arrived as part of organized tour groups. Two hundred ninety individuals (93 percent), of the 312 individuals surveyed throughout the year of 1989, came to the resort affiliated with a tour group. The list of tour companies who had long-term commercial arrangements with the Luperón Beach Resort in 1989 were the following: Regency (Canadian); Traffic (Canadian); TUI (German); Fischer-Riesen (German); and AirTours (British). Of the agencies listed above, Regency, AirTours, and TUI, in that order, sponsored the largest number of guests for the resort throughout the year.

The reason given by most hotel visitors for coming to the Luperón Beach Resort was by and large for leisure. Of the 312 tourists surveyed in 1989, 300 (96 percent) said the main purpose for their visit was for recreation purposes. Six individuals came to the hotel on business (2 percent). Six others surveyed (2 percent) came to the hotel for such personal reasons as visiting family in Luperón (4 individuals), attending a wedding in the community (1 individual), and car problems forcing them to stay in Luperón overnight (1 individual). Gender was not a significant factor in selecting the Luperón Beach Resort. Fifty-two percent of guests surveyed at the resort were males and 48 percent were females.

According to the hotel's director, the goal of the resort was to accommodate the needs of middle-class tourists and those traveling as a family. He said that while single individuals were welcome, they often found the lack of a "singles" atmosphere at the resort boring. He informed the various tourist agencies he worked with to promote the resort as a place where family vacationers were particularly welcome. I found that 66 percent of all guests surveyed said that they had come to the resort with other family members, 31.5 percent came with friends, and only 2.5 of those surveyed came to the resort alone. The director's goal of promoting the Luperón Beach Resort hotel as a place for family holidays is supported by my data. The average tourist staying at the

resort was a mature adult, with the mean age being between 40 to 44 years old. Again, this supports the director's view that the hotel was being promoted as a family resort.

### The German Tourists

German tourists composed 25 percent of all tourists interviewed at the Luperón Beach Resort over the course of the 1989 research period (77 individuals). The number of German tourists at the resort did not remain constant; rather, their numbers fluctuated greatly over the annual tourist cycle (see Table 11). My German tour representative informants told me that the typical peak season guest, whether one was discussing the peak winter or summer season, was more affluent than the off-season traveler and had a tendency to stay longer at the resort. My data supported these assertions. During peak winter tourist season (from the 1st of January to the 15th of April) and peak summer tourist season (the 15th of June to the 14th of September) the majority of German tourists averaged a three week stay at the resort (80 percent). At off-seasons periods in the spring (the 16th of April to the 14th of June) and autumn (the 15th of September to the 31st of December), 80 percent of the German tourists stayed only two weeks, while the other 20 percent stayed for a three week holiday. According to the various tour representatives of the German tour companies, the off-season tourists from Germany paid significantly reduced rates for two week holidays. Three week holiday rates increased considerably, prompting many of the less affluent off-season German travelers to opt for shorter holidays.

The average German tourist was between 45 and 50 years old and was on holiday with his or her spouse. Several older couples often came on holiday together. Also representing a significant proportion of the German vacationers were the two generation family group on holiday together consisting of parents and child with her or his spouse. There was no specific location in Germany where most tourists came from. Tourists



from northern Germany cities such as Hamburg and Berlin were well represented, but numerous Germans tourists also came from southern and central regions of the country. Gender differences among German tourists were insignificant, with 51 percent of all respondents being male and 49 percent being female.

Most German tourists had prepaid holidays which included two meals per day (93 percent), but by the end of several weeks they began to tire of the hotel's dining facilities and would go into town for the occasional meal or to visit local shops for the sake of variety. Almost all of the German tourists went into the town of Luperón at least once during their holiday (94.8 percent). During some part of their holiday at least 52 percent of the German tourists who visited the town bought at least one nontourist consumer item in town stores. Some common purchases were tobacco, medicine, fresh fruit, or snack foods. In addition, at least 69 percent of the German tourists bought at least one tourist souvenir from community shops during the course of their holiday. Many of my German informants told me that the wider variety of tourist goods and the lower prices offered in the town, in comparison to the shops at the hotel, induced them to purchase items in town rather than at the resort. Popular tourist souvenir items included T-shirts, bottles of rum, ceramic figurines, jewelry made of amber, larimar, black coral, polished cow horn, and pink conch shell, leather goods, and Dominican coffee. Tortoise shell jewelry and conch shells, while admired, were rarely bought by tourists of any nationality (the United States and various European countries forbid the importation of any products made of tortoise shell).

The German tourists at the resort in 1989 were, for the most part, avid sightseers. Almost 94 percent of all German tourists surveyed said they had gone on at least one extra paid tour while on holiday, and a large percentage of the Germans went on more than one excursion (82 percent). A few of the favored tours included trips to Laguna Grande (a scenic lagoon boat ride) and a visit to a "Haitian" village near Puerto Plata, a shopping and beach tour to Sosúa, an evening tour to a restaurant and casino in Puerto

Plata, a coastal day cruise on a sail boat, and the Bushwhacker Jeep tour. A small number of the German tourists also made special two and three day trips to either Samaná or to Santo Domingo.

Mentioned previously was the fact that there was a correlation between the length of time tourists stayed at the Luperón Beach Resort hotel and the likelihood they would dine in one of restaurants in the town of Luperón. Food at the resort for those guests on the meal plans offered little variety. Many evenings had culinary themes such as Chinese food night, Italian night, Spanish night, barbecue night, etc., but while many of the ingredients used at the resort for preparing meals were from the Dominican Republic, there was no special promotion of Dominican cuisine.

Each week the offerings essentially remained the same. After several weeks tourists were ready for a change. They could either order special meals such as lobster or chateaubriand from the menu and pay additional money, or they could venture into town for a meal. Many German tourists chose the latter. Only 7.8 percent of all German tourists surveyed had never dined in any of the town restaurants during their holidays. Those who dined in town averaged almost three meals per person during the length of their holidays (2.93 meals).

Most German tourists exhibited a high rate of satisfaction with both the treatment they received at the Luperón Beach Resort hotel and with their experience in the Dominican Republic. Only two German individuals said they would never return to the resort. Both were young males who found the family atmosphere promoted at the resort boring. One of these individuals came on holiday with his elderly parents and the other young man had come alone. The single traveler said that after two weeks he had all the relaxation he could handle and had hoped that more single women would have been at the resort. He said that the year before he had traveled to Spain alone and had spent a wonderful two week vacation as a swinging single. The Luperón Beach Resort

enclave was too isolated from the rest of the tourist resorts on the north coast of the country for his taste and the night life at the resort was too tame.

These two individuals were in a small minority. Over 97 percent of the German tourists said they had a wonderful vacation and might return again in the future. Interestingly, four individuals interviewed were repeat guests at the resort. They had come in 1988 and again in 1989. In 1992, one of the hotel waitresses told me that two of the same German families had come to the resort every year since it had opened.

### The Canadian Tourists

The Canadian presence at the Luperón Beach Resort was quite high throughout 1989. They represented 31.4 percent of all tourists (98 individuals) at the resort during 1989. During the peak winter season they comprised 37 percent of all tourists at the hotel and during the off-season spring season they represented 49 percent of all guests. During the peak summer season only 18 percent of all guests at the resort were Canadian, but in the off-season autumn season their numbers had begun to increase again and they represented 26.5 percent of the hotel bookings. The vast majority of the Canadian tourists flew out of Toronto with the Regency tour company and came from predominantly English-speaking parts of Canada. At the end of 1989, during the off-season autumn tourist period, a small number of guests at the hotel (8 percent of those surveyed during this time period) were French-speaking Canadian tourists flying from Montreal with Traffic tour company.

The Regency tour company has had a long-standing business arrangement with the Luperón Beach Resort hotel. Beginning in December 1987, when the hotel opened its doors for the first time, Regency has been responsible for a major share of the hotel's bookings throughout each tourist season. The importance of this business arrangement is exemplified by the fact that the Regency tour agency has a tour representative living at

the resort at all times. This is the only tour company that has an on-site representative living at the resort with the exception of the AirTours agency that had a company representative living at the resort during its seven month business venture in Luperón.

The average Canadian tourist in 1989 was slightly younger than the German visitor with a mean age between 40 and 44 years. The range of variation of tourist ages was quite wide among the Canadian visitors to the resort. Twenty-one percent of the Canadian guests were 29 or younger. The majority (52 percent) were between the ages of 30 and 49. Seventeen percent were between 50 and 64 years old and 10 percent were 65 or older. Again, gender differences between Canadian guests were insignificant with 51 percent of the guests being male and 49 percent being female.

The largest category of Canadian tourists came to the resort with their spouse (38 percent). The second largest category, 34 percent, came with a friend or group of friends (33 individuals surveyed). The majority of those Canadians coming with friends traveled with their boyfriend or girlfriend (22 individuals). Thirteen percent of the Canadian guests at the resort came with their spouse and children, six percent came with their spouse and other adult couples, seven percent traveled with relatives other than their spouse, and only two percent traveled to the resort alone.

According to my Canadian tour representative informants, almost all the Canadian guests staying at the resort were on a meal plan (98 percent). Meal plan options included three, two, or one meals a day, with the vast majority of the Regency Canadian tourists selecting the two meal a day package. The tourists could select any two meals to eat during the day according to their preferences, with the favorite option being a late breakfast and dinner. Alcoholic beverages and soft drinks were not included in this plan and were paid separately by each guest.

The Canadian tourists averaged the shortest stay at the resort of all the package tour guests. Arriving at the resort Saturday evenings, most would stay seven days and depart Sunday mornings for the Puerto Plata International Airport. Of the 98 Canadian



guests surveyed throughout 1989, only four individuals stated that they had booked for longer than one week. The four individuals who stayed longer remained at the hotel for a 14 day vacation and all of these individuals took their extended holidays during the peak winter tourist season.

Spending only a week in Luperón, and having paid for a meal plan, fewer Canadian guests ventured into the town to dine. A minority of the Canadian guests at the resort never even ventured into the town for any reason; 17.4 percent responded that they never visited the town, except passing through it on a tour bus, during their entire holiday. Forty-eight percent of the Canadian tourists interviewed had never eaten a meal in any of the town's dining establishments. Fifty-two percent of Canadian respondents said they had eaten at least one meal in the town while on holiday. Seventeen of these individuals (33.3 percent) had dined twice in town, and only one individual interviewed had eaten three meals in the town (this individual and her husband were repeat visitors to the hotel).

Of the 81 Canadian respondents who said they had ventured into the town of Luperón during their stay, 63 percent said that they had purchased at least one nontourist souvenir. The most common commodities purchased were cigarettes, soft drinks, snack foods, and alcoholic beverages later consumed in their hotel rooms (according to hotel policy this was forbidden, but many tourists ignored this rule). Souvenirs were also purchased by Canadians at the numerous gift shops in the town. Seventy-eight percent of the Canadians venturing into the community of Luperón purchased at least one tourist souvenir prior to returning to the resort. It was not uncommon to see a group of Canadians enter town on a Saturday afternoon in a hired taxi, spend an hour or two traveling from tourist gift shop to gift shop buying presents, and then return to the resort to begin packing for their return voyage the following morning.

The Canadian tourists were not quite as avid sightseers as the German guests at the Luperón Beach Resort hotel. Twenty-one percent of the Canadian vacationers never went on any of the special tours offered at the hotel. Most of these individuals were content to spend a week basking in the warm sun far away from the cold Canadian weather. The majority of the 79 percent of my respondents (77 individuals) who did go on a sightseeing tour only went on one special excursion. Sixteen percent of those surveyed who went on any special tours said they had gone on more than one. Favorite tours for the Canadians were, in the order of their preference: Dinner and casino tour, the Brugal Rum Company and Puerto Plata shopping tour, the Bushwhacker Jeep tour, and deep-sea fishing.

The average Canadian tourist found his or her stay at the Luperón Beach Resort hotel satisfactory. Only nine individuals surveyed said they would never return to the hotel under any circumstances. Several of these individuals (3) complained that drinks were too expensive and the quality of the food was poor. Four said that the resort did not have enough recreational activities. One individual was upset because he had to pay an exorbitant bill for a sunfish sailboat mast he had broken and another guest was dissatisfied with the hotel's water quality (all showers at the resort were mixed salt and fresh water). Aside from these dissatisfied customers, most Canadian tourists were happy with their holiday experience at the Luperón Beach Resort hotel.

### The English Tourists

Promoted by a large volume travel agency, AirTours, the majority of the English tourists came on a "no frills" package tour for a two week holiday. While AirTours offered the option of buying a meal plan at the resort, most of its customers (89 percent) came to the resort without buying any meal plan. These English tourists prepaid only for round-trip travel and their rooms. Rates for this holiday ranged from as low as

£260.00 for a two week holiday and flight for stand-by vacationers, to £580.00 for individuals who wanted to select what resort they were going to. The stand-by AirTours English tourists arrived at the Santo Domingo International Airport after flying for ten hours from Manchester, England not knowing where they would be staying in the Dominican Republic. Approximately half the tourists stayed at resorts on the south coast of the island, while the rest traveled on buses across the breadth of the country for five hours to arrive at the Luperón Beach Resort and other north coast Puerto Plata tourist zone resorts. Many, not having been forewarned of the long ride, arrived at the resort in foul moods cursing AirTours for their discomfort.

It was these tourists which initiated the great English invasion of 1989. Between the months of May and the beginning of November 1989 the resort and the town of Luperón were inundated by large numbers of English tourists. The English tourists began to arrive in large numbers at the end of May. Even arriving late in the off-season spring tourist cycle, they still managed to comprise 20 percent of all tourists at the resort during this period (see Table 11). During the peak summer season they made up 58 percent of all the guests at the Luperón Beach Resort. In the off-season autumn tourist cycle they comprised 33.5 percent of all guests at the resort (the AirTour contract ended the first week of November and this figure includes all of the autumn season indicating the numbers of English tourists at the resort were quite high during the first two months of the autumn off-season). Even though the English tourists were not present at the Luperón Beach Resort hotel during all of the peak winter season and parts of the off-season spring and autumn tourists cycles, they still comprised 30.4 percent of all guests at the resort in 1989.

The average English tourist stayed at the Luperón Beach Resort for a two week holiday. Eighty-six individuals (90.5 percent), of the 95 English tourists surveyed, spent 14 days at the hotel. Six individuals (6.3 percent) stayed for three weeks and three individuals returned home after only one week at the resort. The mean age of the

English tourists at the Luperón Beach Resort hotel was between 35 and 39 years old. Thirty-three percent of the English guests were under the age of 30. Forty-one percent were between 30 and 49 years old. Seventeen percent were between the ages of 50 and 64, while nine percent were 65 or older. There were slightly more female English tourists (55 percent) vacationing at the resort than male tourists (45 percent).

The majority of the English tourists came either with their spouse (42 percent) or with friends (41 percent). Approximately 10 percent (9.5 percent) of these tourists came as a family group with their spouse and children (9 individuals surveyed). Just over six percent (6.3 percent) traveled with other relatives and only one individual surveyed had come alone. Most of those traveling with friends, 61.5 percent, came with a single close companion of the opposite sex (24 individuals surveyed). The remainder arrived in parties of friends composed of members of both sexes or in single sex groups of friends.

The following data illustrate why the English made such an economic impact in the town of Luperón while the AirTours contract with the resort was being honored. All of the English tourists interviewed had visited the town during the course of their holidays. Over 87 percent of the English tourists purchased at least one nontourist item in local stores during their vacation. Compare this figure to the 69 percent of the Germans, or the 52 percent of the Canadians, who did the same thing and it is easy to see that the English tourists were quick to exploit the lower prices found in the community shops. Seventy-seven percent of all English respondents also purchased tourist items in the town gift shops which, again, was significantly higher than the purchases made by either Canadian or German tourists (sixty-nine percent of Germans and 64 percent of the Canadians purchased tourist souvenirs in the town during their holidays).

It was the town restaurants, however, which benefited enormously from the English tourists during the summer and early autumn months of 1989. The lion's share of the English tourists' business went to the three tourist-oriented restaurants open in the



community at that time (Luperón had four tourist-oriented restaurants in 1993 according to my community contacts). The English tourists averaged just over 9 meals (9.21) in community restaurants during their visit at the resort. Only one of my English respondents had never dined in any town restaurant during her stay at the resort (she was an elderly woman who was confined to a wheel chair and did not leave resort premises during her holiday). Eight of the respondents (8.4 percent) had dined less than five times in town and four individuals (4.2 percent) had eaten in town more than thirteen times (all four of these individuals had spent three weeks at the Luperón Beach Resort).

Like clockwork, as the sun began to set, one could see small groups of English tourists walking into town from the resort or begin to arrive in taxis. After initial experimentation, many individual parties favored a certain restaurant to which they returned almost every evening. This was in a way reminiscent of the English attitude towards the local pub, with diners going to eat, drink, and socialize with friends, day after day, in a familiar environment where everyone knew each other. An informal network developed among English tourists, whereby newly arrived tourists were informed by those already present that great bargains were to be had in town. Where the best food could be eaten, which shops sold items at the lowest prices, what shop owners tried to fleece tourists, became information passed on from one English tour group to another.

It was the presence of these English tourists in the town of Luperón that initiated a boom period for community businesses from June to November (this was the length of the English agency's contract with the hotel). Nontourist oriented businesses benefited by the presence of the English tourists because they frequently bought tobacco products, snack foods, and beverages at these establishments to take back to the hotel. Many a hotel room meal eaten by the English visitors consisted of foodstuffs bought in *luperonense colmados*. This outward migration of English tourists away from the hotel

premises every night was a major source of irritation for the hotel administration. More concerning this issue will be said in the following section of this chapter.

Most of the English tourists (95 percent) went on at least one sightseeing excursion during their holiday in Luperón, and 53 percent went on more than one sightseeing trip. The most popular excursion among the English was the night out to the Puerto Plata restaurant and casino. Forty-one percent of those interviewed had gone on this tour, several of them having gone more than once. The Bushwhacker Jeep tour was also a success among the English tourists, with 31.5 percent having gone on this tour at least once during the course of their fortnight holiday. Visiting the Brugal Rum company and going shopping in Puerto Plata and Sósua were tied for a distant third for tours favored by the English.

Most English tourists had a wonderful time on holiday in Luperón. When asked if they would consider returning to the Luperón Beach Resort hotel for another vacation, 83.2 percent said that they would. However, even though the majority of English tourists were satisfied with their stay at the hotel, the highest percentage of dissatisfied customers of all hotel guests surveyed (16.8 percent) was recorded among these English "package-tour" guests. Common complaints were that the hotel was too expensive and that the voyage to and from the airport was too long. Most of the negative comments were directed at either the hotel administration or at the AirTours agency.

Generally, the English tourists found the *luperonenses*, both in the hotel and in the town, to be warm, friendly, gracious hosts. This is reflected in the fact that all English tourists, when asked whether or not they would consider coming to the Dominican Republic again if they could choose a different tour agency or stay at a different resort, said they would like to return to the country. In fact, I saw several individuals and couples come with AirTours to Luperón in the beginning of the summer and return

Table 12: Resort Guest Length of Stay and Community Economic Impact.\*

| <u>Vacation Duration/<br/>Type of Meal Plan</u>             | <u>% Buying Nontourist<br/>Goods in Town</u> | <u>% Buying Tourists<br/>Goods in Town</u> | <u>Average # of Meals<br/>Eaten in Town</u> |
|---|--|--|---|
| Guests staying:<br>1 to 3 days/<br>with meal plan<br>(N =9) | 12.5%  | -----                                      | 0.55  |
| 1 to 3 days/<br>no meal plan<br>(N=13)                      | 23.0%  | 15.4%                                      | 1.00  |
| 4 to 7 days/<br>with meal plan<br>(N=94)                    | 52.1%  | 62.7%                                      | 0.66  |
| 4 to 7 days/<br>no meal plan<br>(N=17)                      | 52.9%  | 41.2%                                      | 1.18  |
| 8 to 14 days/<br>with meal plan<br>(N=46)                   | 50.0%  | 63.0%                                      | 1.96  |
| 8 to 14 days/<br>no meal plan<br>(N=83)                     | 89.1%  | 73.5%                                      | 9.43  |
| 15 or more days/<br>with meal plan<br>(N=39)                | 48.7%  | 69.2%                                      | 3.67  |
| 15 or more days/<br>no meal plan<br>(N=11)                  | 85.7%  | 100.0%                                     | 12.00                                       |

\*Total number of respondents equals 312.

again several months later. They told me that the low tour price and the wonderful atmosphere in Luperón induced them to book another trip immediately while they could afford it.

During the course of my investigation in 1989, it became apparent that two important factors influencing tourist interaction with community businesses were the type of vacation meal package the guests had while at the resort and the length of their holidays.

Table 12 illustrates clearly the relationship between these variables and tourist economic impact in the community. The longer a guest stayed at the Luperón Beach Resort the more likely this individual would ultimately visit the town to eat or go shopping. Those guests who came to the resort without a meal plan dined much more frequently in the community restaurants than those guests with meal plans. Nationality was not the important factor in this correlation; rather, meal plans and time spent at the resort were the most important variables. The fact that the English tourists dined more frequently in the community was because most came without a meal plan. They found the food and commodities much cheaper at business establishments in the town and took advantage of these price discrepancies. Table 12 does demonstrate, however, that guests with meal plans staying at the resort for over two weeks averaged 3.67 meals in town compared to .66 meals eaten in town by guests with meal plans who spent only four to seven days at the resort. This shows that the longer tourists stay at the resort the more likely they will seek dining alternatives from hotel cuisine whether or not they are full meal plans.

#### Attempts at Controlling Tourist Behavior by the Enclave Resort Management: The Pampered Prisoners of Profit

The vast majority of the tourists who come to the Luperón Beach Resort seek a brief hiatus from their everyday routines back in their respective metropolitan countries. However, for the local population everyday routine becomes enshrouded by the ubiquitous presence of the tourists. The host population is forced to adapt to the presence of a foreign leisure class with different world views and expectations. The type of tourist holiday arrangement, whether or not one's vacation comes with an all inclusive meal plan, and the length of the sojourn in the host community, are all



important factors in determining the intensity of interactions between the local population and the tourists.

It was the arrival of the large numbers of English tourists in June 1989 which initiated an economic boom in the town of Luperón. Those townspeople who were able to financially invested in the tourist trade. From April to October 1989, the number of gift shops increased from nine to sixteen. Many of the small shops (*colmados/pulperías*) began carrying quality brands of rum and cigars favored by the tourists. A double pricing standard became apparent in some of these shops during this period, with townspeople paying a lower rate, and tourists a higher one for the same item. According to some of my town informants, this was rationalized by the local entrepreneurs as fair because, although their prices were inflated for tourists, they were still substantially lower than those charged by the hotel shops.

Not all shopkeepers took advantage of this opportunity to fleece the tourists. Three of my informants told me with pride that all their customers were charged the same price regardless of whether or not they were *luperonenses*. It should be noted that all three of these individuals were proclaimed born again Christians and active in two of the local Protestant churches. They told me that the teachings of the Bible forbid them to cheat their customers. Most shopkeepers who took advantage of the tourists only modestly inflated their prices. In several such shops tourists paid U.S. \$0.32 for a soft drink, while *luperonenses* paid U.S. \$0.20. Cigarettes prices for tourists might be U.S. \$0.64, while locals paid U.S. \$0.56. Bottles of rum which cost townspeople U.S. \$4.46 might cost a tourist U.S. \$5.10. Compared to the hotel's prices of U.S. \$0.80 for a soft drink and U.S. \$0.96 for a package of cigarettes, these price mark-ups were modest. However, those business people who overcharged tourists did run the risk of being boycotted if tourists discovered they were being overcharged intentionally.

The hotel management relied on internal hotel sales of goods to tourists to make a profit. The Luperón Beach Resort hotel was reimbursed a set rate for each room

occupant by the metropolitan travel corporation. Nevertheless, according to the director of the hotel, because of international and national competition room rates were artificially low and the hotel's major source of profit came from the numbers of meals, beverages, and consumer items sold to the guests. For this reason alone the management had sufficient incentive to minimize the tourists' interaction with community businesses outside of their control. Prices for food and beverages were high at the resort. Hotel dinners averaged U.S. \$12.75, while domestic beer was sold for U.S. \$1.43. Restaurants in the town provided meals starting at U.S. \$4.77 and domestic beer was sold for U.S. \$0.80. Tourist souvenirs were also significantly lower in town shops than at the resort. For example, a small machete with leather scabbard could be purchased in the town for approximately U.S. \$11.15, while at the resort shops the price for this item was U.S. \$19.10.

The summer months were a period of economic growth for town businesses, but a financial disaster for the resort management. In the months between June and September 1989 (the summer high season), when 50 percent of the rooms were occupied by English guests from the AirTours agency, the hotel's bars and restaurants were barely breaking even. A large percentage of the hotel's guests were eating and shopping in town rather than at the hotel. Locals could encounter English tourists exploring all parts of the town. They could be seen walking the back streets of the poorer neighborhoods, going to the *gallera* on Fridays to watch the cock-fights, and sitting under the shade of a mango tree playing dominos and drinking rum with some of the local men. The money these English tourists spent in town establishments was more than anything previously experienced by the townspeople.

Management at the Luperón Beach Resort hotel had a different perspective. In one interview the hotel director indicated that this particular booking with AirTours had been a mistake and would not be repeated (it has not). Prior to the arrival of the English tourists, the hotel management had several strategies designed to minimize the loss of

potential revenue to business establishments in Luperón, but these had never been formally promoted. These strategies included officially forbidding consumption of nonhotel purchased food and beverages on hotel premises, emphasizing that hotel management was not responsible for theft or guest safety off resort premises, and claiming that food hygiene and water quality were inferior in Luperón business establishments.

From July 1989 on, every new group of tourists were explicitly told about hotel rules against contraband food and beverages, and the resort's liability limitations. In September 1989, a new hotel shop selling food, beverages, and other consumer goods which tourists frequently purchased, was opened within the enclave resort. The new hotel shop's prices were only slightly higher than the prices in town establishments and hotel management hoped that the tourists would no longer buy most of their foodstuffs in the town. While most English tourists continued to go to town and ignored the hotel's policy restricting importing food and beverages into the resort, the opening of the hotel shop and the negative statements concerning safety, town food and water quality, generated a large amount of hostility toward the hotel management among some townspeople.

In 1989, access to the Ciudad Marina enclave properties was largely unrestricted for any individuals arriving during the day light hours. The guards would wave anyone in cars or motorcycles through the gates and *luperonenses* who wanted to walk to the beach via the resort property were allowed to do so. Some local fisher folk who fished from shore were allowed to continue this practice along the shore line of the enclave property. The only time this was not permitted was during *semana santa*. During this week no one not affiliated with the hotel was allowed onto resort property. The director, Sr. Ramírez, said that this was to ensure that the hotel's guests would have the privacy they desired when large numbers of Dominicans came to Luperón to the public beaches. The beach the hotel was situated on, Playa Grande, was open to both tourists

and local inhabitants, but local visitors had to walk or drive the longer route to the public beach access.

During this week extra security guards were stationed at the ocean side of the hotel to make sure no Dominicans, who were not guests at the resort, used hotel facilities. Food, drink, and novelty vendors sold their wares freely on the beach where foreign tourists and Dominican visitors splashed together in the surf. In April 1991, this was not the case. Hotel management (no longer under the benign leadership of Sr. Ramírez) tried to forbid Dominican vendors from selling their wares on the beach. Hotel guards attempted removing these vendors by order of the new hotel director. The local police were summoned and they ruled that the beach was public property and allowed the vendors to continue selling their goods. However, the enclave property was ruled off-limits to all nonguests. Local informants told me that access to the property is now closed to any local inhabitants except for employees going to work at the resort.

I observed signs at the resort entrance in 1992 stating in both English and Spanish that those entering must inform the guards of one's business prior to entering the enclave property. Such signs were nonexistent in 1989. Nevertheless, my access to resort property was never challenged by the guards when entering several times during my 1992 visit. Whether it was because I was obviously a foreigner, or because the guards (most of whom were the same individuals working at the resort in 1989) remembered my previous work at the resort, is unclear. Local inhabitants were not granted the same freedom. They were stopped at the gate, questioned about their reasons for entering the property, and, unless they were clearly known to be hotel employees or on hotel business, denied access.



### The Birth of the LSLE: Conflict and Cooperation

If the host population perceives tourism as a source of exploitation, resentment of its presence is likely, and can cause a rise of a "hustling" mentality among the inhabitants (Manning 1982:14). Many members of Luperón's middle- and lower-classes felt that the hotel was exploiting the community in 1989. Only two years after the introduction of tourism into the community of Luperón, early manifestations of this "hustling" behavior could be seen among some community members.

Mentioned previously was that some shops began to have a double pricing standard charging tourists more for goods than local residents. Also, some young children living in the town would approach tourists and beg for money. For many of these youngsters this behavior was little more than a new type of game, but during 1989 incidents of begging multiplied and some of the poorer adults of the community began to request alms from tourists as well. In comparison to other tourist communities in the Dominican Republic who have endured the presence of tourists in their midst for a longer period of time, the presence of a "hustling" mentality in Luperón was only at an incipient stage of development; however, some townspeople involved in the tourist trade were worried that these changes would cause a negative backlash, drive tourists away, and "kill the goose that laid the golden egg."

To combat the rise of what some *luperonenses* considered deviant behavior, improve the relations between the town and resort, and make the town more attractive for tourists, an organization was formed by some townspeople in June 1989 called the *Luperón sociedad para limpieza y embellecimiento* (LSLE). This organization was not founded by the wealthiest families of Luperón who were already heavily involved in the tourist industry; rather, its members were a cross section of individuals predominantly drawn from the local middle-class. Professionals, such as teachers, doctors and nurses, joined waitresses, cooks, *motorconchos* (motorcycle taxi-drivers), hotel maids,

small shop-keepers, tour guides, an electrician, and even an ex-mayor of the town to become the founding members of the LSLE. An American who lived in the community, and ran the Bushwhacker Jeep tour at the resort, was one of the individuals who germinated the idea of such an organization and helped bring the initial members together for the first meeting. He refused the offer to be its president, and never took any official position in the organization other than member, but remained active in the LSLE until he moved to Puerto Rico at the end of 1990.

LSLE members had one thing in common. They were deeply devoted to their community, considered tourism a potential catalyst for positive change, and wanted to control the industry's growth in such a way that it would benefit the community. Most, but not all of the LSLE members, either had small businesses which sold some items to tourists, worked in such businesses, or worked at the Luperón Beach Resort. For example, the ex-mayor owned the only pharmacy in town and frequently sold medicines to tourists; one of the school teachers also owned a gift shop; the electrician worked at the hotel; and several of the *motorconchos* frequently ferried hotel employees and tourists to and from the hotel.

All these individuals had concluded that by organizing a society devoted to improving the town's tourist "image" increased economic benefits derived from tourism would be achieved by all. What evolved from this society was a local organization that began to politically promote the rights of the townspeople in order to maximize their benefits vis-à-vis those of the resort. As in other tourist regions, this was a difficult process which included a certain amount of conflict between the community and the tourist resort (Cohen 1983).

The elite families of Luperón already had cordial relations with the resort owner and the director of the hotel. The wealthiest local family had sold the coastal land on which the resort was built. The patriarch of this family, Don Gregorio, had made a substantial amount of money on this deal and he controlled adjacent property which he hoped to

sell. Other members of his extended family controlled one of the three tourist restaurants, three of the gift shops, and several taxis. Another of Luperón's elite families owned a tourist restaurant and a gift shop. This family also owned a substantial portion of the local coastal land which would only increase in value as Luperón's tourist industry expanded. Members of these elite families were occasionally seen at the Luperón Beach Resort hotel as honored guests and the hotel director maintained cordial relations with them. In return, these families supported enthusiastically the tourist resort and defended its interests at the community level.

Until the founding of the LSLE, the only contact the resort had with the local townspeople was either through the local elites or with those employees residing in the local community. Members of the LSLE believed that tourism could provide the community with many opportunities if more interaction between the townspeople and tourists could be initiated. This was attempted in several different ways: (1) community based education programs were planned; (2) town beautification projects were organized; and, (3) lobbying for the town's rights versus those of the resort. In this way the LSLE hoped to improve the town's benefits from tourism, while protecting the quality of life of its inhabitants.

The first project selected was to improve the smaller of two town parks. Plans were developed to clean-up the park, plant flowers, wash the light posts, rewire the park lights (the majority were no longer functioning), and place more benches in the park. The park selected for the initial project was located at the entrance to town where all tourist traffic passed and where many *luperonenses* congregated during the day waiting for *guaguas* (mini-buses used throughout the Dominican Republic as public transportation), buying coconuts or coffee from street vendors, or having their shoes cleaned by the shoe-shine boys. I took part in cleaning the light posts and remember having the ex-mayor remark to all passersby, "*Mira, es una vergüenza que un americano está trabajando tan duro cuando ningún luperonense está ayudándole*" (Look,

it's a shame that a foreigner is working so hard when no *luperonense* is helping him). I soon had plenty of help.

This project proved to be an immediate success. The park was transformed into an attractive plaza and LSLE members took considerable pride in their accomplishment. When I returned to the community in 1992, the park was still an attractive site and was being well maintained by community members. The success of this project stimulated the organization to attempt other projects such as improving the cleanliness of the streets, getting increased promotion of the town by resort management, and educating community members about how tourism would affect community life. The results of these other projects were mixed.

The LSLE designated two society members to be responsible for each town street as organization representatives. Their role was to inform the people living on that street about organization policies, planned events, record local perspectives concerning community fears or resentments about the industry, collect money for the organization, educate community members about tourist behavior, and explain how tourism would effect the growth of the community. Over U.S. \$160.00 was collected by LSLE members to help pay for the costs of renovating the park. The LSLE street representatives also became well-acquainted with the frustrations many townspeople had with the aloof behavior of the resort's management.

The principal frustrations of the townspeople centered around control of a local resource which was consistently in short supply in the region, water. Many townspeople believed that the hotel was diverting the town's water supply and using it for its own purposes. This belief was heightened during the dry summer months of July and August 1989, when regional electrical failures left the town without water for long periods. The community was without any water supplied once for seven days in August 1989.



The Luperón Beach Resort hotel, too, suffered from a chronic shortage of fresh water due to the fact that most wells dug on resort property were brackish because of their proximity to the ocean (mentioned previously was the fact that the hotel showers used mixed fresh/salt water). Fresh water was trucked to the resort from the Bajabonico river fifteen kilometers distant and a special pumping station was built by the resort on the outskirts of the town to provide sufficient supplies of fresh water for the hotel. Townspeople cited this pumping station as the location where the town's water supply was being "stolen" by the hotel. During one week of August, when water had been unavailable for over five days, hotel supply trucks and *guaguas* transporting workers to and from evening shifts at the hotel were stoned by unknown assailants. Publicly, all townspeople blamed these incidents on young *tigres* (thugs) coming from other communities. Privately, however, several local inhabitants believed that disaffected youths from the town were responsible.

Members of LSLE, with support from local political leaders, decided that a commission of delegates should meet with the hotel management to talk about this problem. The hotel director, Sr. Ramírez, went to great pains to show the commission that the hotel was not using town water. Showing regional blueprints from the *Instituto Nacional de Aguas Potables y Alcantarillados* (INAPA), he explained that the town's water problem was based on antiquated water mains, poor pressure due to illegal tapping of these pipes by farmers between Luperón and the village of El Estrecho, and power-outages which were affecting the whole nation. He mentioned that INAPA was presently laying a new water main between El Estrecho and Luperón, and plans to renovate the town's large gravity-fed cistern, which had fallen into disuse, were designed to improve the town's water supply.

He was amenable to the LSLE commission requests to provide hotel guests with a map which highlighted various shops and restaurants of tourist interest in the community of Luperón. He even went so far as to donate money to help rebuild the

local high school's fence which was in disrepair and was considered an eye-sore by many townspeople. These actions by Sr. Ramírez were certainly designed to diffuse a potentially volatile situation and involved little sacrifice on the part of the hotel management, but among community members the results of this meeting were hailed as an important victory. LSLE members and many other townspeople thought that this was the beginning of a better working relationship between the resort and the host community. Unfortunately, this era of mutual understanding and cooperation between the resort and community was to last only a short time.

The hotel director, Sr. Ramírez, suffered a mild heart-attack in September of 1989, and was replaced as director in June 1990. Since late 1990, the new directors of the hotel have implemented a policy whereby only tourists on "full-package" tours are allowed as guests at the Luperón Beach Resort. Changes in hotel management and policy can seriously affect relations with the host population (c.f. Farrell 1990), and the gains townspeople felt they had made with Sr. Ramírez were overnight negated by the new management's revised booking policy.

Returning to Luperón during the beginning of the winter high season in 1992, the author noted that the Luperón Beach Resort hotel almost had full occupancy. All tourists on the premises carried with them tickets which entitled them to all the food and drink they wanted while guests at the resort. Meanwhile in the town two of the restaurants were closed for lack of business and two others (owned by members of the town's elite) were open, but with only a few customers every evening. Five of the local gift shops had shut their doors completely and two others had become stores catering to the needs of the townspeople.

By the beginning of 1992, the *Luperón sociedad para limpieza y embellecimiento* had long ceased to exist. Interviews with former members indicated that the organization members, after their initial success during the water crisis, were never again able to engage in negotiations with the hotel management. All requests for further

discussions had been cordially received by hotel officials, with specific times for meetings being made, and then canceled at the last minute "due to unforeseen circumstances." Local politicians also failed to provide any money for future projects on the LSLE agenda. In addition, some individuals in the organization grew disenchanted with the internal political maneuvering of several members and quit in disgust. In the end, the core group of ten members felt that the shortage of funds, the failure to receive any support from local officials, and the hotel management's obstinacy in continuing a dialogue, undermined any chance to promote positive change in the existing set of relationships between the resort and the community. The remaining members of the LSLE disbanded in frustration.

### The Economics of Tourism in Luperón

It was noted in 1989 that the Luperón Beach Resort hotel and community tourist businesses exhibited different sets of purchasing arrangements with other sectors of the Dominican economy. Having free access to the Luperón Beach Resort premises because of my status as an occasional tour guide for tourists going on the Bushwhacker Jeep tour, living in the town of Luperón, and being considered a "partial" insider by community inhabitants (because of my marriage to a *luperonense*), I was able to interview members of both the enclave resort and the community with relative freedom throughout 1989. It was mentioned in Chapter Five that the hotel management purchased all their seafood from the large markets in Puerto Plata. The hotel had similar arrangements for purchasing all its other foodstuffs, beverages, and merchandise needed to keep the resort functioning. The Luperón Beach Resort purchased most of its food and beverages from wholesale and retail outlets located in the large urban centers of Puerto Plata and Santiago de los Caballeros. Some specialty items, such as many of the tourist souvenirs, were purchased in Santo Domingo and trucked to Luperón. I saw

the Luperón Beach Resort driver and hotel buyer making purchases in the fish markets of Puerto Plata and they were also observed in the city of Santiago de los Caballeros buying fresh vegetables and imported canned goods in various wholesale and retail markets.

The local restaurants and shops purchased most of their fresh vegetables, fruits, meat, and fish from local suppliers (town butchers, local vegetable market, town fishmongers, and the few independent fish suppliers), while relying on the urban markets of nearby cities for any goods not produced locally. Special arrangements were often made between local restaurants and some local *luperonense* suppliers to ensure a steady supply of foodstuffs at the level of quality required. For instance, it became almost impossible to obtain any large beef steaks from the local butcher in Luperón after July 1989, because owners of the local restaurants made exclusive purchasing agreements for these cuts of meat. In Luperón, it became apparent that the secondary tourist establishments in town provided more local linkages with traditional local economic activities such as farming, fishing, and stock raising than the enclave resort itself. Local meats, fish, plantains, and seasonal fruits were all incorporated into the Luperón restaurants' menus.

One would think that increased local demand for such products would benefit the poorer farmers and fishermen in the region. Unfortunately, this was rarely true. The perennial credit shortages and traditional economic arrangements with intermediaries to finance their instruments of production make it difficult for poorer farmers and fishermen to benefit from the increased demand for their harvests which local tourism promotes. Local intermediaries advance cash to both small farmers and fishermen with the understanding that the loan obliges them to sell all of their harvest exclusively to them.

Mentioned in Chapter Five was the fact that the majority of the artisanal fishermen of Luperón, with a highly perishable product, could not risk alienating local intermediaries



by selling directly to town restaurants, even if prices were higher, because they relied on the intermediaries goodwill to finance their livelihood in an unpredictable climate where personal savings were marginal or nonexistent. Rather, the local restaurants were forced largely to purchase their fish from the town's intermediaries and it was these middlemen who benefited from the increased demand supplied by the tourists. Similar arrangements could be found among the small and middle-sized farmers in the region and several of the restaurateurs, in addition to their tourist businesses, were large landowners who incorporated their own livestock and agricultural produce into their restaurants' menus. This set of economic relationships in primary sector production inhibited further linkages between local producers and the secondary tourist establishments of Luperón.

As the information on agricultural practices and crops in Chapter Four indicated, a wide variety of vegetables, grains, fruits, meats, and milk are produced by farmers in the region surrounding Luperón. However, even if most local producers were not obligated to sell their produce to intermediaries, few could benefit from the local tourism market in the town of Luperón in its present level. It is a question of scale. The hotel needs reliable supplies of foodstuffs at the level of quality and quantity dictated by the number of tourists at the resort at any one time during the year. There is no central agricultural supply center in Luperón or marketing cooperative where such crops could be obtained in quantity, and no single farmer, whether small or large, has the storage facilities or the crop diversity to deal directly with the Luperón Beach Resort. Naturally, the hotel buyers go to the large urban markets to obtain what they need.

The few local tourist restaurants do not have the amount of business necessary to demand large quantities of local produce. Small purchases from local butchers, vegetable shops, or private arrangements with a few local farmers are sufficient to supply the needs of these businesses. As a result of the small scale of the secondary tourism businesses in the community presently, no farmer can rely on local tourism to

supply sufficient demand to buy every crop he or she produces during the course of the year. Economically, the scale of tourism in Luperón is still too small to reorder existing marketing networks. One large international hotel, a few small hotels (*pensiones*), and four small tourist restaurants cannot consume even a small percentage of the fertile region's production capacity.

While local farmers, fisher folk, and ranchers are not reaping great rewards from the introduction of tourism into the local economic system, there are some *luperonenses* who are obviously benefiting financially. Clearly, those *luperonenses* who own businesses catering to tourists are benefiting to some degree even though the hotel tries to restrict hotel guest buying to hotel shops. Taxi drivers, tour bus drivers, and some *motorconcho* drivers have increased salaries because of the presence of tourists. More employment is available in the town, even if some of it is poorly paid, as the result of the tourism industry. The hotel in 1992 employed approximately 180 *luperonenses*. Wages at the resort were high by local standards and jobs at the resort provided benefits local employment did not. Approximately 60 individuals in town worked in tourist related positions in various restaurants, gift shops, driving taxis, painting T-shirts, or as occasional tour guides.

Many of these individuals also pursued secondary employment opportunities when available. For example, in 1992, Jorge worked as a tour guide several times a week because of his English skills. Each tour he received U.S. \$12.10 and tips for a day's work. In addition, Jorge taught English evenings in the John F. Kennedy Language Institute for a small monthly salary of U.S. \$72.60. During the days when he was not conducting a tour to Puerto Plata or Sosúa, he often would offer to show tourists around town and help them buy souvenirs. For this he might receive tips or an invitation to a meal in one of the local restaurants. Jorge's occupational multiplicity is tourist-related and helps him to make a decent living by community standards.

The growth of local tourism employment opportunities has also allowed some formerly poor individuals to lift themselves out of poverty and experience a level of independence not previously experienced. This is especially true of several women employees at the resort. The majority of the *luperonenses* working at the resort are women (in 1989, 62 percent of the employees from Luperón were women). Cleaning rooms, serving drinks, doing laundry, cleaning floors are all jobs done solely by women. In 1992, several young women from the community also worked on the activities staff or served as administration clerical support, but the majority of the 118 *luperonense* women, 65.5 percent of local employees, worked in relatively unskilled support positions. Even if these positions were mainly unskilled jobs, they gave these women steady income, benefits, and security they would be unable to find in other employment offered locally. The following are the stories of two female resort employees and their views concerning work at the hotel.

### Sonya and Ramona: The Benefits of Serving the Golden Horde

#### Ramona's Story

Ramona cleans rooms at the resort primarily during the day shift. Ramona earned U.S. \$97.00 bi-weekly and an additional U.S. \$16–32.00 in tips per month in 1992. Sometimes she works evening shifts, 4:00 p.m. to 12:00 p.m., but she prefers working during the day and be at home with her family evenings. Cleaning rooms involves mopping the tile floors, changing the sheets and towels, dusting, checking the toilet paper, and emptying the trash. She cleans each room with another woman and together they are in charge of cleaning all rooms in building #9. Ramona says the work is not too strenuous because all rooms are air-conditioned and she manages to stay cool.

Ramona is 46 years old and lives with her husband and her three children (two boys and a girl) in Luperón. Feliz is her second husband and he owns a small *colmado* in Luperón. He is the father of four grown sons from a previous marriage who also live in the community. His first wife died of cancer several years before he met Ramona. Ramona says Feliz loves her and, even though her children are not his, treats her children like they were his own. The earnings from the *colmado* are enough to support the family, but do not allow them any luxuries. When Ramona was pregnant with her third child her husband left her and has never sent any money to help support them. She told me that her first husband had legally recognized the first two children and should be forced to pay some money for their maintenance, but he has moved far away and she had no idea where he is. Feliz was not asked to do it, but he legally recognized her youngest son as his one of his heirs anyway a few years after they began living together. Ramona says that Feliz is very attached to the boy and thinks of himself as his real father.

After her first husband had left her, and before Feliz and she began living together, Ramona said life had been very hard. She had done odd jobs for various community members and her father had on occasion given her some money, but raising three children with almost no money meant that she was almost always in debt and she went hungry frequently. In 1988, after she and Feliz had been together for two years a chance to work at the Luperón Beach Resort was offered. She discussed it with Feliz and explained that the extra money she earned could be used to pay for the children's education and it might allow them to buy some things he could not afford. He agreed and she paid for a certification course offered by INFRATUR and began working at the resort.

In the beginning of 1992, Ramona and Feliz were living together in a new house. Feliz told me that while most of the furniture and appliances in the home were his, the cement floored, *tabla* walled, and zinc roofed house was Ramona's. He still owned his



*colmado*, which was formerly both his store and house, but now it was only used as his store. Ramona had bought the plot of ground for the new house in 1990 and had borrowed some money from Feliz to build the house in 1991. Feliz jokingly said that his wife would stay with him for at least the next three years until she had paid off his debt. Ramona said that Feliz knew better than to say that since she loved him, but she also felt better knowing that she would always have a place to live for herself and the children. Feliz said that it was a good idea that she had a home in her name since he was not getting any younger (he was 66 in 1992) and problems might develop between Ramona and his sons over the inheritance when he dies.

Working at the hotel allowed Ramona to fulfill a dream which meant security for herself and her family. In 1992, all her children were still in school. The youngest was in fourth grade and the oldest was in high school. Ramona hoped that she could continue working at the hotel, pay off the debt on her house, and save enough money to pay for the education of any of her children who wanted to go to the university.

Ramona likes working at the hotel because she says she is constantly meeting people from different places. She showed me letters from two families, one Canadian and one German, who have befriended her family. She told me that both tourist families have been to the resort twice and have been guests for dinner at her new house. On the second visit they brought gifts for everyone. Clothes from Canada and perfumes from Europe were reciprocated with bottles of Dominican rum from Feliz's *colmado*. Ramona told me that guests are always giving things to her before they leave. This is an apparent, however difficult to quantify, tangible economic benefit of working in the local tourism industry.

### Sonya's Story

Sonya, too, enjoyed working at the Luperón Beach Resort hotel because of the people she met while serving them. Sonya worked at the Luperón Beach Resort from January 1988 until March 1992. She worked as a waitress serving drinks and meals to the guests. In January 1992, Sonya told me her salary was U.S. \$121.00 bi-weekly and an additional U.S. \$24–40.00 per month in tips.

Sonya's story is slightly different than that of Ramona's. In 1987, Sonya was an attractive, 29 year old, single mother whose married lover had left her without support soon after she gave birth to their son. Initially, Sonya lived with her grandmother after she was deserted by her son's father. Five months after the birth of Sonya's son, the hotel management said they were looking for people to work at the resort. Sonya applied for work and the hotel director said that she would make a pretty waitress and should come and work at the resort after she received her certification diploma. She said that after a four week evening training course which she took as a scholarship student, the hotel director hired her as a waitress. While she was at work, her grandmother or her aunt would take care of her son.

Sonya told me that during the time she has been working at the resort (January 1988 to January 1992) she had only missed one day of work from illness. She was placed on unpaid leave twice during the these years, once in May 1989 and once in May of 1991, but she said that the hotel management had always been fair with her. She also told me that she received one week of paid vacation every year she worked at the resort.

In February 1990, Sonya met a group of German tourists who would change her life. Max and Elsie came to the hotel for a three week vacation with their recently divorced son Dieter. During their stay Max, Elsie, and Dieter became friends with Sonya. After two weeks Sonya invited her German friends to visit her family and have dinner with them. Before the Germans left they wrote down Sonya's address and

promised to write her. Over the next year several letters arrived from Dieter and his parents. Some friends of Max, Elsie, and Dieter came to the hotel on holiday and brought a package from them for Sonya and her family. In the package were pictures, clothes and toys for Sonya's son, candies, and several lovely dresses for Sonya, her aunt, and her grandmother.

In January 1991, Max, Elsie, and Dieter returned to Luperón for another three week holiday. Dieter and Sonya spent several of her free days visiting Puerto Plata and Santiago de los Caballeros together. Max and Elsie would come and visit at her house and it became apparent that they were very close to her family and especially adored her son. Sonya said that it was during this visit that she began to fall in love with Dieter. It was also clear that Dieter felt the same way about her. Throughout 1991, Sonya and Dieter sent letters to each other, and in January 1992, Dieter returned to Luperón for two weeks alone. Sonya spent all her free time with Dieter during this time.

In a postscript to this story, I later learned that Dieter had invited Sonya to come to Germany to visit with his family for three months in June 1992. She went to Bonn, Germany, where Dieter and his parents lived and spent three months as a tourist. During this time Sonya's son was being cared for by Sonya's grandmother and aunt. At the end of her three month stay in Germany, Dieter asked Sonya to marry her and she accepted. They decided to get married in Luperón. Max, Elsie, Dieter, and Sonya returned to Luperón in September 1992 and Sonya and Dieter were married. Dieter's parents returned to Germany soon after the marriage, while Dieter and Sonya made arrangements to bring her son with her to Germany. After spending an additional three weeks in Luperón, Dieter, Sonya, and her son returned to Bonn where all three reside. Dieter works, Sonya is a housewife and is taking German language lessons, and her son has been enrolled in kindergarten. May they live happily ever after.

## Tourism and Community Social Transformations

### Community Views on the Economic Impact of Local Tourism

It is clear that tourism has benefited some individuals living in Luperón. Ramona and Sonya are two examples of individuals who have received both economic and social benefits from contact with tourists and their involvement with the tourism industry in Luperón. The elites in town involved in the tourism industry are earning more money, some of the poorer *luperonenses* have found local employment which pays relatively well, and a few individuals have discovered that local tourism has provided an avenue to leave Luperón to pursue new lives elsewhere. But what of the average *luperonense* who does not work in a tourist related business? The following section of this chapter examines *luperonense* views on the socio-economic and sociocultural change tourism has introduced in the community.

Of the 58 households surveyed in Luperón, I discovered that only 8 (13.8 percent) contained individuals who had worked in some capacity building the Luperón Beach Resort hotel. Furthermore, it was discovered that only 12 households (20.1 percent) surveyed reported someone in the household either working presently at the resort or having worked at the hotel or for the Ciudad Marina enclave in the past. At the time the survey was conducted 8 households (13.8 percent) had members who were presently working either at the hotel or for Ciudad Marina (the gate guards are on Ciudad Marina payroll). This meant that at the end of 1989, approximately one in seven households in the town of Luperón had at least one member working at the enclave tourism resort.

Another question asked in the survey was whether or not any members of the household worked in any local businesses which catered, at least partially, to foreign tourists. Nine households (15.5 percent) responded that someone living there worked in such a business. Five households surveyed (8.6 percent) had members who worked



both at the enclave resort and in one of the secondary tourist establishments in town. If one combines these figures, this indicates that at the end of 1989, 12 households surveyed, or 20.1 percent of the total, were directly benefiting economically in some way from the presence of the tourism industry in Luperón. On the other hand, this also indicates that four out of five households had to accept the intrusion of tourism into their lives while receiving no direct economic benefits.

When asked whether or not they felt that tourism has had a positive or negative economic impact on community life, 36 household heads (62.1 percent) responded that they felt that tourism has benefited the community economically. When asked to explain in what ways they felt tourism has improved the local economy respondents cited the following: (1) tourism has provided many jobs in the community that did not exist previously; (2) tourists bring money into the community through local businesses; and (3), because tourists come to Luperón, the national government will spend money improving the community's electricity and water supplies to the benefit of all *luperonenses*.

On the other hand, 22 household heads (37.9 percent) claimed tourism had provided no economic benefits for them and had actually hurt them financially. These individuals said that the introduction of tourism is directly responsible for inflated prices for food and land in Luperón. These sentiments were echoed by some of the individuals (3 respondents) who said tourism had benefited the community economically. They said that while tourism has improved their lives, it has also resulted in local inflation.

This is supported by information collected concerning land prices. Land around the town of Luperón has become expensive. In 1984, one informant told me he had sold some coastal agricultural land near the present site of the enclave resort for approximately U.S. \$100.00 at that time. In 1989, he was trying to sell an adjacent holding for U.S. \$11.15 per square meter or at U.S. \$7011.00 per *tarea*. This

indicates that the value of coastal land has increased 70 times since tourism was introduced into the community.

The price of most land in the surrounding region has not increased so drastically. Land in the town of Luperón could still be purchased in 1989 for around U.S. \$3,150.00 per *tarea* depending on its location. Availability of land was a problem for townspeople who wanted to build a home. Land near the mangrove trees and bay could still be purchased relatively cheaply, but land in the higher and drier sections of town were mostly not for sale. Many of the best plots were being sold to build businesses or were sold to outsiders who were willing to pay inflated prices for the land.

Ten of my respondents who said tourism had decreased economic opportunities cited inflated land prices as one of their main concerns. They said their children would not be able to afford to buy land in the community to build a house and they would be forced to move elsewhere. Unimproved land inland from the coast could still be purchased much more cheaply than in Luperón. Plots of land for housing near the road in La Sabana, the village adjacent to Luperón, could be purchased for approximately U.S. \$1,900.00 per *tarea*. Agricultural land further removed from the road could be bought for as little as U.S. \$88.00 per *tarea* if it was categorized as being hilly terrain or approximately U.S. \$200.00 per *tarea* for fertile savanna land (land located on the valley floor).

Much of the prime agricultural land around Luperón was zoned for tourism development. Several of my rich *luperonense* informants told me they would be willing to sell their coastal holdings if the price was sufficiently high. They said that as tourism grew in the region their coastal lands would become prime locations for tourist villas, smaller resorts, or even a possible small airport. The individual who was offering to sell his land at U.S. \$11.15 per square meter said that he had no serious offers yet, but knew that if he waited long enough some rich foreigner would be willing to pay his price. It is obvious from such statements that local agriculture will be negatively

affected as productive land will be side-lined for tourism construction. A new generation of *luperonense* small farmers will find it increasingly difficult to buy land close to their community.

### Community Perspectives on the Social Impact of Local Tourism

The fact that the community has been affected socially by the introduction of tourism is an issue that no one interviewed challenged. However, how life in the community has been affected by tourism is an issue which raises controversy among *luperonenses*. Almost 38 percent of my respondents (37.9 percent) said that tourism had promoted positive social change in the community. Not surprisingly, all of the individuals who said tourism had promoted positive social change in the community also claimed that tourism had produced increased economic opportunities locally. However, more interesting is the fact that ten respondents who claimed that tourism had increased economic opportunities in the community also believed that its introduction had resulted in negative social changes. This is not necessarily a contradiction.

The ten individuals who responded positively to the question of the economic impact of tourism on community life agreed with another 28 respondents, all of whom felt that tourism has not produced economic benefits for the majority of inhabitants, that tourism had resulted in a less pleasurable social climate in the town. Chief reasons cited for tourism resulting in a negative social impact on community life were an increase in crime, loss of local control, old traditions of hospitality were disappearing, and a decrease in individual privacy.

The issue that tourism has raised local crime rates is difficult to prove since I was only in the town for one year and the police did not have the statistics, or were not willing to give me the data, concerning past crimes rates in the community. During 1989, no tourist was assaulted in the community of Luperón. Several had purses stolen

in the town restaurants and two individuals were robbed by machete wielding youths while walking back to the hotel late one evening in August. Twice in 1989, the hotel staff told me that rooms were broken into and belongings were taken by thieves. There were no murders or other reported violent crimes in the town of Luperón during 1989. Several burglaries were reported, as were at least four stolen motorbikes, and one attempt to steal a recreational fishing boat used for deep-sea fishing charters (the thieves were apprehended). Two groups of drug smugglers were caught (previously mentioned) by police and members of the coast guard. Nevertheless, local inhabitants perceived tourism as being the catalyst for bringing more undesirable elements into the community.

Twelve household heads (20.1 percent) said that crime had increased in the community since tourism had been introduced. They said that in the past people could leave their houses unlocked if they went to buy something and not worry. Today, everyone locked their doors whenever they went out and brought their motorbikes into their houses every evening. Crime was linked, in the minds of many informants, to another phenomenon which local inhabitants claimed was a result of tourism; the fact that more outsiders were moving into the community.

Newcomers moving into the community to work at the resort, or in other tourism-related businesses in town, were changing the lifeways of the inhabitants for the worse, I was told by many respondents. They felt that old traditions were being eroded and a sense of community unity, the feeling of being a *luperonense*, no longer existed. Fifteen individuals (25.9 percent) claimed that townspeople were no longer as friendly, or as willing to help neighbors, since the introduction of tourism. Newcomers were not as willing to hire local townspeople, nor did they respect local traditions, according to some of my informants. "All they (newcomers) think about is making money," one disgruntled informant told me. "They think we are ignorant *campesinos* who know



nothing and they believe they are better than us just because they come from the capitol (Santo Domingo) or Santiago," he told me.

Some *luperonenses* believe that their privacy is being invaded by tourists. "When tourists look in your window and take photographs of you cooking, washing, or socializing, you feel like you can't escape them," one older woman whose home is next to a tourist restaurant told me. "Some nights, the music, laughter, and talking until one in the morning, makes it impossible to sleep," said another informant, who lived several houses away from one of the tourist restaurants most popular with the English tourists in the summer of 1989. I remember hearing three young men complaining during the week of the *fiesta patronal* of San Isidro in May 1989, that their own *fiesta* was being taken over by tourists. That evening several groups of Canadian and German tourists had come down from the resort to join the festivities. These tourists were enjoying themselves and joined community members who were dancing in the central plaza. At one point only the tourist couples were dancing, and it was then that I heard the young *luperonense* men complain about too many tourists being at their celebration. Clearly, some residents feel that tourism has become an intrusion into their lives and inhibits them from acting in ways they had previously. However, most inhabitants feel they are powerless to control the spread of tourism's negative influences.

*Luperonenses* are acutely aware that the owners of the enclave resort and the hotel directors have an inordinate amount of political influence in the capitol. They cite the fact that the town harbor, closed to foreign vessels for many years, was opened in 1990 as a direct result of negotiations by the enclave resort owners with government officials. Several *luperonenses* told me that they felt that the resort owners, the local elites and politicians, were working together to further their own economic gains and ignoring the needs of the poorer townspeople. Several individuals told me in 1992, that all the improvements the town had made in recent years, telephone service, newly paved roads to the resort, improved water and electricity supplies, while benefiting the townspeople,

would never have been done unless the area had been listed as an important tourist destination. Nevertheless, these improvements have been made and all members of the community are beneficiaries of the national government's largesse, whatever the rationale behind the decision to implement these projects.

### Conclusion

It is clear that most tourists coming to Luperón spend a satisfying holiday at the Luperón Beach Resort hotel and find the townspeople they encounter to be warm and gracious hosts. I have shown that the type of meal plan and length of stay at the resort in 1989, had a direct correlation on the economic impact these tourists had on the secondary tourist businesses located in the community of Luperón. Tourists who spent more than a week at the resort, or who came without prepaid meal plans, tended to spend more money in town restaurants and businesses. The arrival of large numbers of English tourists, who stayed at the resort for two or more weeks without meal plans, sparked a minor economic boom during the summer and early autumn of 1989. At the same time the hotel management, whose main profits are derived from food and beverage sales, sought to minimize contact between tourists and local business establishments. Finally, in 1990 the hotel adopted a policy of only accepting full package guests whose meals, beverages, and rooms are all included in one daily rate. This had succeeded in diminishing the economic benefits the local businesses derive from tourism.

Nevertheless, at least one in five households in Luperón were benefiting directly from tourism in 1989. A job at the resort was deemed as a desirable employment opportunity in the local context since the salaries paid were much higher than most positions offered in town. Employment at the resort also provided opportunities to befriend relatively affluent foreigners and several *luperonenses* have received economic

benefits from such connections. At least six *luperonenses*, five females and one male, coming from poor families have married foreigners since 1988, and moved with their new spouses to their countries. It is clear that tourism, as a form of culture contact, has provided a few *luperonenses* with a chance to emigrate.

The impact of tourism has been viewed as a mixed blessing for those *luperonenses* not employed by the tourism industry. Most *luperonenses* are in agreement that having an international tourist resort in their community has prompted the national government to invest more money in improving the town's infrastructure. Better water and electrical supplies, improved roads, and telephone service for community inhabitants would not have been introduced so quickly if no tourists were present in the region, many informants told me. However, many townspeople feel that too much emphasis is being placed on satisfying the needs of the resort and providing for those involved with the tourism industry. The poorer *luperonenses* who do not work in the tourism trade feel that they are being forgotten by the local and national governments.

Inflation associated with land speculation, loss of local control, and crime are three issues local individuals feel they must contend with as a direct result of the introduction of tourism into their community. Many townspeople fear for the future. What will happen in five or ten years? Will they still be able to afford to live in Luperón, or will the community be transformed into a tourist mecca like Sósua, where foreigners have come and built homes, condominiums, and hotels forcing many of the old residents out.

These are questions that officials from INFRATUR could address if they ever decided to meet with the townspeople. INFRATUR has been very efficient in gauging tourist reactions to their Dominican holidays. I remember seeing INFRATUR workers surveying Luperón Beach Resort hotel guests about their Dominican vacations on three different occasions during 1989. However, none of those *luperonenses* surveyed had ever had an opportunity to meet with officials from INFRATUR except for those individuals who conducted the hotel training programs. Local politicians and members

of the hotel management worked closely with INFRATUR when developing Ciudad Marina, but this interaction was never extended to include the local inhabitants whose daily lives would be transformed by the introduction of tourism.

This supports my conclusion that national government planners view positive secondary economic growth in the regions where tourism is introduced as a natural by-product of industry growth. It seems to be that these industry planners think that most Dominicans will benefit from tourism as part of a "trickle-down" economic effect as elite controlled tourism businesses expand. This lack of secondary planning is why tourism can be considered as a highly successful national industry, but must be deemed a failure from the perspective of a strategy to promote local development. In the local context, tourism has failed to promote positive social and economic change for the majority of *luperonenses*.



## CHAPTER SEVEN SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Using a case study approach in examining the *luperonenses*' attempts to accommodate the intrusion of enclave tourism into their community's socio-economic structure, the limitations of this type of tourism plan as a development tool in the Dominican Republic have been illustrated. A model for economic growth based on enclave tourism alone will not provide the impetus for regional economic diversification. Presently, the social impact of tourism in the local communities where this industry has been introduced is an issue that has been largely ignored by Dominican government agencies. More effort should be made by the Dominican government towards initiating a coordinated plan integrating the needs of the tourism industry, local community members, and other traditional economic activities if national politicians are heartfelt in their desire to use tourism to promote development in the country.

The enclave resort is not designed to promote economic linkages at the community level. Rather, its inherent flaw is that resort management seeks to limit the interaction between the tourists and local community to improve its own profits. In spite of this, as has been demonstrated in other tourist studies, as the local tourist system developed in Luperón, and the host community obtained a better understanding of the system, some *luperonenses* tried to take more active roles in manipulating the industry (c.f. Cohen 1979; Oliver-Smith *et al.* 1989). However, those individuals who are most heavily involved in the local tourist system are the local elite and, "acting according to their class

interests," manage to control most of the secondary business opportunities associated with the local growth of tourism among themselves (Lee 1978:21).

There is no denying that the growth of tourism in the Dominican Republic has exhibited a phenomenal dynamic in the past twenty years. Starting in 1967 as a nation with almost no tourists trade whatsoever, by 1990, the Dominican Republic had managed to capture an 11 percent market share of all tourists visiting the Caribbean (ECI 1990:29). Tourism is, and it appears will remain in the near future, the mainstay of the Dominican national economy.

As mentioned in Chapter One, the inherent flaw in this national financial success story is that Dominican tourism is dependent on specific variables beyond the control of government officials or private entrepreneurs within the country. The flow of international tourists to and from the Dominican Republic, or any other Caribbean destination for that matter, is controlled by national and multinational corporations based in the principal tourist sending nations of Europe and North America. These metropolitan tourist corporations seek out locations throughout the world where the local governments will provide the most benefits, amenities, and profitable terms prior to establishing themselves. In an economic environment dominated by these large tourist corporations based in the first world tourist sender nations, the ministries of tourism from Barbados, Jamaica, or the Dominican Republic, for instance, are forced to bid against each other for the right to host a certain number of tourists seeking leisure time in a tropical Caribbean resort.

The almost complete control of tourism advertising, sales, and transportation networks places the first world tourist companies involved in this industry in highly favorable bargaining positions vis-à-vis Caribbean national tourism boards. The result of this inordinate power over the global tourist market is that the political economy of tourism in the Caribbean today tends to mimic pre-existing economic relationships which Caribbean islands had, and to a large degree still have, with metropolitan

countries in other economic sectors of production. In this scenario Caribbean agricultural production or mineral extraction generates large profits for the multinational corporations based in the industrialized countries of Europe and North America who control the refinement and distribution of the finished products made from these raw materials. Profits from such operations remain largely in the metropolitan nations. Those profits that do filter back into the Caribbean from these multinational industries' insular operations tend to benefit mainly the local elites who oversee production for the mainland corporations. Few, if any, benefits, are obtained by the majority of the Caribbean lower-classes except the privilege of working in relatively unskilled jobs for low wages. The poorer members of the Caribbean societies provide a source of cheap labor to furnish the human energy needed to keep the local expressions of multinational business ventures running profitably. This set of economic relationships can be observed in such sectors as export agriculture, mining, industrial "free trade zone" manufacturing, or tourism.

Tourism in the Dominican Republic exhibits a similar set of economic relationships. Remember Sr. Ramírez, the director of the Luperón Beach Resort hotel, complaining that due to inter- and intra-island competition he was forced to sell his rooms at an artificially low rate to generate bookings by various foreign tourist agencies. After selling rooms at such low prices, Sr. Ramírez relied on the sale of food, beverages, and tourist goods within the hotel in order to make a profit. His frustrations at seeing the English tourists venture into town, rather than spend money at the resort, were, in part, the result of the first world nations' control of the international tourism industry. The resort would only make money from the English guests if the tourists spent their money within the borders of the enclave's shops and restaurants. From a strictly business perspective, Sr. Ramírez could not afford to let his guests go into the local community and spend the majority of their money.

This is one of the chief reasons why the enclave model of tourism in the Dominican Republic fails to induce secondary growth at the community level. The successful competition of secondary tourists shops at the local community level would imply a major cut in total profits for the management of the enclave resorts. Nevertheless, local townspeople are interested in becoming involved in the tourist system even though their level of involvement may be limited by enclave resort management attempts to control the flow of tourist moneys into their own coffers. Townspeople, too, realize that the presence of foreign tourists can provide a significant boost to the local economy if only they can be lured out of the enclave resorts and into the community.

The fact that some local community members benefit from tourism was made implicitly clear by my research results. The longer foreign tourists spend on holiday determines the amount of money they invest, and the type of interaction they have, with community inhabitants beyond the confines of the enclave. Those tourists coming on one week holidays, with full meal plans, may never meet a Dominican national except for those serving their needs within the resort. Those tourists staying longer, with or without meal plans, eventually find their way into the community seeking a diversion from the enclave scenery.

That tourists visit the local community does not imply that increased economic opportunities will be forthcoming for all townspeople. Rather, it became apparent during my research that only a small portion of the *luperonenses* benefited from the growth of tourism in the region. I discovered that in the town of Luperón only one in five households had members directly involved in the local tourist industry. This means that 80 percent of the households must pay the social consequences of having tourists in their back yards while receiving little or no compensation for their presence.

It is true that tourism provides some linkages with other sectors of the economy in the Dominican Republic, but this does not necessarily imply increased benefits for local producers. The production of local fisher folk and agriculturalists does ultimately find



its way into the national tourist system. Much of the fresh food tourists eat while on holiday in the Dominican Republic is produced by small farmers or artisanal fisher folk. The problem is that these economic linkages with such sectors as fishing, agriculture, manufacturing, and construction tend to be at the national and regional levels. At the local level they are poorly developed.

The small farmer or fisherman has rarely the opportunity to sell directly to tourist businesses. The larger tourist enterprises need to purchase their foodstuffs in quantities sufficient to feed large numbers of tourists and these consumer goods need to be available at the level of quality demanded by metropolitan tourists. The scale of production of the individual small agriculturist or fisherman is not likely to meet these needs.

Wholesalers in central markets located in urban centers throughout the Dominican Republic provide the national tourist industry with a reliable supply of fresh produce. These urban wholesalers are supplied by regional intermediaries who, in turn, purchase the harvest of local small-scale producers and transport these products to the urban centers. These middlemen, through various methods such as debt obligations, control of storage facilities, and owning the vehicles necessary for transporting large volumes of produce to the distant urban markets, can afford to "buy cheap and sell dear." It is not uncommon for middlemen to realize 100 percent or more profit between buying commodities from the rural producers and then selling these goods to urban wholesalers. It became apparent from my research that the local intermediaries who buy fish from the *luperonense* fisher folk were more likely to benefit from the higher prices obtained in the central fish markets of Puerto Plata, in part due to increased demand induced by the growth of regional tourism, than the fisher folk themselves.

The fisheries industry along the north coast of the Dominican Republic does supply the enclave resorts within the north coast tourist zone with all the fresh seafood visiting international tourists desire. However, a shift towards the offshore fishing fleets'

domination by nonfishing entrepreneurs, and the continuing domination of the marketing of the inshore artisanal fishing fleets' production by regional intermediaries, has resulted in few benefits being accrued by individual fishermen from the growth of the tourism industry in the region. An increase in the numbers of offshore fishing boats means there are a few more employment opportunities for individuals willing to work in this dangerous profession. Members of the inshore fishing fleet will continue to provide the regional market with seafood destined for tourist tables as long as local inshore stocks of high quality seafood exist and these stocks are diminishing according to my informants among the inshore fishermen. However, the intermediaries who control the refrigerated storage facilities in the communities of Luperón and Cambiaso receive the lion's share of benefits derived from this linkage with the regional tourism trade.

I found that only those fisher folk who are completely independent of the local intermediaries' influence over the storage and marketing of the sea's bounty are deriving increased economic benefits from the introduction of tourism into Luperón. These individuals can afford to deal directly with the secondary tourist restaurants in the community and in this manner receive higher prices for their catch. But the number of individuals able to avoid the powerful control local intermediaries exert over the lives of the local fisher folk are few. Problems with cash flow, equipment costs to repair worn-out machinery, the need to sell highly perishable catch quickly, and lack of a large local market for their catch, places most local fisher folk under domination of the few local intermediaries who live in the local community.

The introduction of tourism in the local community has provided both a catalyst for economic growth within Luperón and a sense of social loss among some of the community's citizens. Those individuals who work for the Luperón Beach Resort hotel exhibit a high degree of satisfaction in the fact that they have well paid jobs by local standards. Several *luperonense* resort employees have discovered that working in an

environment where foreign tourists are present has provided extra benefits beyond the standard salaries received. Gifts, friendships, and increased opportunities to emigrate are some of the secondary benefits derived from serving the "Golden Horde" by some of the hotel employees. The fact that many of the hotel employees working at the resort in 1989, were still there in 1992, demonstrates that working conditions are considered a desirable alternative to many of the economic opportunities found in the local community.

Tourism has meant increased economic benefits for a few nonhotel employees living in Luperón as well. Taxi drivers, restaurants owners, gift shop owners, and some nontourist oriented business owners have seen an increase in their income because of the presence of tourists in the community. Most of these individuals are members of the local elite and have the money and requisite knowledge of foreign tourists' needs to provide them with suitable services or commodities. A few individuals, such as Jorge whose manner of making a living I described in Chapter Six, have managed to integrate their skills in speaking English into jobs as tour guides for the resort and as interpreters for foreign tourists visiting the community. By engaging in several part-time jobs related to tourism, these individuals have succeeded in providing a decent living for themselves. Occupational multiplicity, an adaptive strategy common among individuals in marginal economic settings, is being employed by some *luperonenses* like Jorge who could not survive on the part-time work of being just a teacher, or tour guide, or interpreter. By combining all three activities and providing a vital function for the tourist visitors, Jorge has managed to carve an economic niche for himself in the local tourist scene.

Most poorer *luperonenses* are not as fortunate as Jorge. Having neither the money of the local elite to invest in tourism enterprises, or some special skill required by tourists, these individuals view tourism as providing no economic benefits for themselves. Rather, they see tourism growth in the community as signaling the end of

traditional community lifeways. Many individuals in the community fear the future and feel that they will be pushed aside as more and more outsiders arrive to exploit the presence of foreign tourists. Increased crime and inflation associated with land speculation is what these individuals envision will affect their future. Tourism will be the force that pushes their sons and daughters away from them. They fear that the next generation will have to move inland, away from Luperón, in order to purchase land to build a house or grow crops.

Some poorer individuals would like to become involved in the tourist trade because they see that money is to be made, but do not know how. During my 1989 sojourn in the community, *luperonenses* were constantly coming up to me and asking how they could become involved in selling goods to tourists. Knowledge of tourist desires and needs were limited among most inhabitants of Luperón. Even the local elite who were already engaged in the secondary tourist trade sought advice concerning how they could make their businesses more attractive to foreigners. Many of the local elites had spent time abroad in the United States and Puerto Rico, but this experience had not prepared them for dealing with tourists from Canada, Germany, or the United Kingdom.

This vital informational role that the Dominican Ministry of Tourism could play is not part of its standard operation. Providing local communities with information about foreign visitors habits and desires would be useful for the many Dominican towns impacted by the growth of tourism. A sample of questions which could be addressed by INFRATUR include the following: What do they like to eat; how do you prepare it; what things do they like to do for recreation; what do tourists from various countries like to buy in the Dominican Republic; what kind of information concerning local cultural traditions do tourists find interesting? These are all vital pieces of information that community members in Luperón were forced to learn through trial and error.

What little information I could provide to residents was given freely to all who asked. Things like providing guests at local restaurants with condiments at the table



besides salt. Many foreign guests, being wary of high salt intake, like to have the option of using black pepper or Tabasco sauce instead. While many Canadians were happy with ketchup on their French fries, most English preferred having vinegar on their "chips," and some Germans liked to have mayonnaise with their "*Pommes frites*." In the beginning of 1989, most town restaurants did not provide guests with mixed drinks. Buying a bottle of rum and mixing drinks at the table was not to the taste of many tourists. After I made this observation several restaurant owners began to offer a small selection of mixed drinks which were sold by the glass.

Information was also given freely to members of the community who were not part of the elite. Several poor youngsters asked me how they could make money from the tourists. I suggested that they sell fresh cut flowers, washed tropical fruit, or home-made sweets, and stand in areas of the town where tourists would visit. A few youngsters began to have success at selling such items to visitors during the halcyon days of the English AirTours contract when numerous tourists visited the town daily. An older man asked me if tourists would be interested in purchasing coconuts and sugar cane if he sold them on the street. I said it was possible, especially if he looked the part of a rustic type with a palm frond hat and machete to open the coconuts. This, I explained, would attract tourists who would want to take photographs of him working. He later told me that he sold quite a few coconuts and sugar cane to tourists and most of them did want to take his picture. This individual also managed to sell these food items to local townspeople (at a lower rate than to tourists); in this way he earned a modest income even when the tourists were not in town.

It became apparent to me that most townspeople were willing to put up with tourists in their community if they could benefit economically by their presence. Alienation was felt most strongly by those inhabitants who received no benefits from tourism, but were constantly coming into contact with tourists. *Luperonenses* had not yet put up social or physical barriers to keep tourists at bay from their daily lives, but some individuals felt

that tourists had no right to come into their community and participate in local *fiestas* or special events. Those individuals disposed negatively towards tourists said that such occasions should only be for community members and that tourists had no right to interfere in the traditions of the community.

Other townspeople tried to accommodate the needs of the tourists and improve the economic benefits derived from tourism by organizing community members. As mentioned in Chapter Six, this attempt at community organization to promote the rights of the townspeople in the face of an enclave resort management reticent in trying to establish economic exchanges with community businesses had few positive results. The actions of the *Luperón sociedad para limpieza y embellecimiento* demonstrate that through organization the community can improve its influence and control of the industry at the local level, but only if supported by local, regional, and national government officials.

When such political support is lacking, or when local politicians have no real influence over tourism development at the regional level as was the case in Luperón, enclave tourist resorts controlled by members of the national elite, with few economic or political linkages at the community level, have little incentive to respond to demands for more equitable distribution of the economic benefits. Local elites are often willing participants in this lack of equitable distribution of economic returns from tourism within the rural community, going so far as to be proponents of the enclave tourist resort management, if they have pre-existing economic arrangements with the resort which is to their economic advantage. If they, too, have been disenfranchised from any economic returns local tourism brings into an area these local elites often become spokespeople for the rights of the community to receive a portion of the economic "pie" tourism brings into a region.

Luperón is not an isolated case. Elsewhere in the Dominican Republic the poor have typically failed to benefit from tourism growth. In the north coast town of Sosúa,

members of the informal economic sector, poor street vendors for the most part, were restricted increasingly from conducting business on local beaches, an area which was the most lucrative for selling goods to tourists (Kermath and Thomas 1992:184-185). When I first visited Puerto Plata in 1986, small shops, bars, and restaurants located along the Malecón (the ocean front avenue) and owned by members of the local middle-class were full of customers, tourists and Dominicans alike, each evening. Street vendors, members of the Dominican lower-class, thronged the street each day selling a wide range of tourist and nontourist goods. In 1989, the Malecón was a sterile boulevard attracting few visitors. The national government had concluded that such businesses harmed the "tourist image" it wanted to create in the city and had shut down what had once been a lively and thriving business district enjoyed by foreign tourists and Dominicans alike.

On the south coast of the nation the best beaches of Boca Chica are now closed to residents of the Santo Domingo. These beaches have become the sole haven of foreign tourists. Another travesty affecting the Dominican poor in the name of tourist development is the *faro a Colón*. Built in Santo Domingo as a monument to Christopher Columbus, and as a tourist attraction, the construction of this lighthouse/museum has resulted in at least 2,000 poor families being evicted from their homes [figures as high as 100,000 individuals being forcefully moved have been cited] (Ferguson 1992:39).

Uprooting hundreds and thousands of Dominican families in order to build a tourist attraction will not promote popular sentiment in favor of increasing foreign tourism. Nor does allowing national elites the privilege of importing goods freely as long as they are destined for large-scale tourists resorts help the growth of local linkages between agriculture, manufacturing, fishing, or construction. The national government provides incentives to the rich Dominicans to become involved in tourism in the same manner the government provides the rich farmer with over 160 *tareas* of land the opportunity to get

government subsidies and commercial loans. The poor, whether they are small farmers or living in communities impacted by the growth of local tourism, receive little direct help from the national government. Those poor Dominicans living in regions of the country where tourism is introduced are expected to accommodate the tourism industry, move if the government deems that they are in the way, provide a source of cheap labor, and never voice any dissenting voices against its growth.

Perhaps one way to improve the secondary economic benefits derived from tourism is for the national government to provide more support in establishing regional marketing cooperatives whose goals are to interface with the tourist industry. Elsewhere in the Caribbean marketing cooperatives have had some success in establishing mutual beneficial linkages with the local tourist industry (c.f. Kitner 1986; Miller 1985). Such cooperatives are more successful in supplying the quantity of goods demanded by large-scale tourist resorts at the level of quality demanded by the metropolitan tourists. In this way organized local producers such as farmers, fishermen, and artisans would be able to interact with the management of tourist resorts more as business equals.

This can only be realized when the Dominican government no longer only uses the rhetoric that tourism is a form of national "development" and starts to actively promote the growth of secondary economic linkages with its growing national leisure industry. Providing certification programs for a few poor Dominicans to learn to work as chamber maids in communities where tourist resorts are being opened is not enough. The national government should not allow tourism growth to occur in the Dominican Republic without an integrated program which provides sufficient economic opportunities for the majority of local inhabitants whose lives are certain to be affected by the introduction of this industry. Presently, while tourism in the Dominican Republic has exhibited all the indications of a successful and growing industry, it cannot in its present manifestation be considered as a force for national development.



Tourism growth in its present form has left existing social and economic structures within the country in place where introduced. The lives of the poorer inhabitants of communities such as Luperón often have been made even more difficult as a direct result of those negative changes such as crime, inflation, and loss of local control which ride in tandem with the local growth of the tourism industry.

## GLOSSARY

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| alcancía     | -- piggy bank. Refers to animals raised by individuals as an investment.  |
| almendra     | -- almond.  |
| arepa        | -- fried cornmeal griddlecake   |
| americano    | -- "american," but used generically for any foreigner.  |
| atarraya     | -- fishing cast net.  |
| ayuntamiento | -- town hall.   |
| bacalao      | -- dried, salted codfish imported from Norway or Canada.  |
| bahía        | -- bay (Luperón's bay formal name is Bahía de Gracias).   |
| bautismo     | -- baptism.   |
| bohío        | -- simple hut made of traditional materials.  |
| braza        | -- one fathom or six feet in depth.   |
| buscón       | -- an agricultural buyer who usually works for a <i>camionero</i> .   |
| burgao       | -- mollusc (small shellfish) harvested from inshore waters ( <i>Cittarium pica</i> ).   |
| caimito      | -- star apple or manchineel ( <i>Hippomane mancinella</i> ).  |
| camionero    | -- agricultural middleman or intermediary.  |
| campeche     | -- logwood ( <i>Haematoxylon campechianum</i> ).  |
| campo        | -- countryside, rural area.   |
| campesino(a) | -- person living in the countryside, sometimes used in a derogatory fashion by people living in urban areas to denote a "hick." |
| caobo        | -- mahogany ( <i>Swietenia mahogani</i> ).  |
| caudillo     | -- political boss; powerful man of horseback.   |
| cibaeño      | -- someone from the Cibao.  |
| colmado      | -- small store.   |
| comerciante  | -- merchant, shopkeeper.  |
| compadrazgo  | -- godparenthood.   |
| común        | -- same as <i>municipio</i> , political/administrative district used prior to the term <i>municipio</i> ; county.               |
| conuco       | -- a word of arawak origins, it refers to a small plot of cultivated land.  |
| copa         | -- cup; also refers to the "purse" section of a seine purse net.  |
| criollo      | -- native or island born.   |
| chinchorro   | -- a large gill net or seine net used by fishermen.   |
| chisme       | -- gossip.  |
| fiesta       | -- party; holiday; festival.  |
| fiscal       | -- district attorney; public prosecutor.  |

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| galleta             | -- cracker; biscuit; slap in the face.   |
| gancho              | -- a specially designed stick with a wire hook at its end used for pulling land crabs out of their holes.                                      |
| guagua              | -- bus, van, or small truck. In the local context it is most commonly used to refer to the minivans used as public transportation.             |
| guanábana           | -- custard apple, tropical fruit.  |
| guáñpan             | -- breadfruit, tropical fruit.   |
| hato                | -- ranch.  |
| hatero              | -- rancher.  |
| INAPA               | -- Instituto Nacional de Aguas Potables y Alcantarillados (State run water company)  |
| indio/a             | -- mixed racial group of European and African heritage.  |
| juez                | -- judge.  |
| juzgado             | -- court of justice.   |
| lechosa             | -- papaya.   |
| luperonense(s)      | -- inhabitant(s) of the town of Luperón.   |
| machote             | -- virile, very masculine man, a rake.   |
| madrina             | -- godmother.  |
| mallá               | -- refers to the mesh of a fishing net.  |
| mangle              | -- mangrove tree.  |
| mero                | -- generic term for grouper  |
| motorconchos        | -- motorcycle taxi drivers.  |
| monte               | -- highlands, hilly region of Luperón, or uncultivated areas.  |
| municipio           | -- municipality, a political administrative unit subdividing Dominican provinces.  |
| ñame                | -- yams.   |
| padrino             | -- godfather.  |
| pajuil              | -- cashew ( <i>Anacardium occidentale</i> ).   |
| palma real/de yagua | -- royal palm ( <i>Roystonea regia</i> ).  |
| "      de cana      | -- species of fan palm ( <i>Sabal umbraculifera</i> ).   |
| parcela             | -- a small plot of land. It is often intermixed with conuco, but parcela also is used when referring to uncultivated land while conuco is not. |
| pargo               | -- red snapper ( <i>Lutjanus campechanus</i> ).  |
| parque              | -- park.   |
| parquecito          | -- little park.  |
| pocilga             | -- pigpen, pigsty.   |
| proyecto            | -- project, plan.  |
| puertoplateño       | -- citizen of the city or province of Puerto Plata. Used most commonly in the former context.  |
| pulpería            | -- small store.  |
| querva              | -- castor-oil plant, also the <i>Luperonenses</i> use the term <i>ricino</i> .   |
| quince              | -- fifteen, also refers to a coming of age or coming "out" party for young women.  |

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| quintal       | -- in Luperón it is an agricultural term referring to one hundred pounds of produce. A quintal métrico would be used to distinguish one hundred kilograms of produce which is rarely used in the region. |
| ricino        | -- castor-oil plant, also called <i>querva</i> .   |
| ruda          | -- an herb called goat'a rue. Used to drive evil spirits away.   |
| sábila        | -- aloe plant.   |
| sancocho      | -- stew.   |
| savanna       | -- flat lowlands.  |
| sección       | -- smallest political/administrative unit in a <i>municipio</i> .  |
| síndico       | -- municipal leader, elected to office every four years.   |
| tarea         | -- common unit of land measurement. There are 6.43 tareas in one acre and 15.89 in one hectare.  |
| telenovela    | -- soap opera.   |
| tigres        | -- thugs or robbers.   |
| tutumpote     | -- oligarchy member, big man, influential public figure.   |
| unión estable |  |
| " libre       | -- common law marriage; living together in a socially recognized partnership   |
| uva del mar   | -- joint firs or sea grapes ( <i>Coccoloba uvifera</i> ).  |
| vela          | -- a wake, vigil, or a candle.   |
| velorio       | -- a vigil or wake.  |
| virginidad    | -- virginity.  |
| vicio         | -- a vice.   |
| víveres       | -- denotes food staples.   |
| yagua         | -- the "bark" of palm trees, dried and used for housing material.  |
| yarey         | -- Type of fan palm ( <i>Copernicia berteroana</i> ).  |
| yautía        | -- a root crop similar to a yam.   |
| zafra         | -- the sugar cane harvest.   |



APPENDIX A  
GETTING TO KNOW THE  
LUPERONENSES: SOME OBSERVATIONS  
ON THE METHODS OF FIELDWORK

Conducting fieldwork in Luperón required the use of a variety of research strategies. Mentioned in Chapter One was the fact that my basic research design shifted upon entry into the community in early January 1989. The fact that a Fishermen's Association was not already in place at that time necessitated that the study of local fishing be analyzed using group membership in the offshore fleet, inshore fleet, and shore fisher folk as one of my independent variables. It is clear from discussions with members of each of these groups that the chief opposition to the creation of a Fishermen's Association came from the wealthier, and politically better connected, individuals among the *luperonenses* such as the two local intermediaries who controlled the local marketing of the artisanal fishermen in the community. They stood to lose an important source of their livelihood if such an organization had been created in Luperón. It is possible that such an organization will still be forthcoming in Luperón, but local fishermen need to obtain the support of outside government agencies and sufficient capital to purchase both refrigerated storage facilities and reliable transportation to take their catch to market before they will dare to alienate the local intermediaries who are their primary source of emergency loans.

The principal research method employed was participant-observation. Initially, I fished with both the inshore and offshore fishing fleets. I visited *conucos* to observe what was being planted and gardening techniques. Cash crop agricultural methods

and ranching practices were observed and large landowners were asked questions concerning land use, ownership, labor, and decision-making practices. This led to interesting quandaries by some landowners who tried to identify the real reasons, in their minds, behind my questions and my actual identity.

Land is wealth in Luperón and questions concerning its ownership and use generated both interest and secrecy. While the central concern of my research focused on tourism and the fisheries of Luperón, an attempt was made to obtain sound data on land ownership and production patterns of the townspeople living in the community. Nonetheless, because of time constraints no more than a superficial investigation in this area was conducted and the data obtained highlights the pitfalls and difficulties of conducting research in a community where gossip and suspicion are rampant. As a learning experience for a relatively new field researcher collecting this data was an invaluable lesson in reality and I will never review another field worker's data on land tenure with the same lack of skepticism.

Back when I was a student working on my master's degree in Colorado several of my friends and acquaintances either had parents or spouses who were farmers and ranchers. One day I asked one of these friends while strolling on his dairy farm how many acres of land he owned and how much alfalfa did the land produce? This individual turned to me and said, "Till, I know you're from the city and aren't familiar with country etiquette so I want to teach you something, don't ever ask a farmer or rancher how much land they own. That's like asking how much do you earn and it's not considered polite." He said it in a joking manner, but the message was clear—you don't ask a person how rich they are and expect to get a reasonable answer, if you're lucky enough to get one at all. Why do anthropologists expect to receive truthful answers to such inquiries? In part, because they try to earn the trust of their informants. Also, through the use of exhaustive surveying techniques and document review misinformation can be minimized. However, to do an adequate job of recording this

data the amount of time expended could take a single field researcher a whole year working full time in order to obtain reliable data concerning one small village of fifty households. Having plenty of time, or sufficient funds to hire and diligently train local informants would certainly facilitate the collection of accurate land tenure data, but unfortunately I had neither of these commodities.

Schneider emphasized that data collection concerning land tenure and production is an enormous and time consuming task (1974:186). I did not have the time to spend on this project to go through the Herculean task of verifying all the land tenure information given to me by my informants in my household survey. The most common error in the data was that those large landowners selected to be interviewed had the tendency to minimize the size of their land holdings and the number of *tareas* planted or cattle owned. Through conversations with other informants it was learned that some respondents answers were grossly understated. Friends and neighbors often knew exact figures on the amount of land or cattle owned and spoke freely, but my own feelings were that to use information obtained in such a surreptitious manner was an invasion of trust. While the results of the section of my household survey concerning land tenure is presented in Chapter Four, let it suffice to say here that the data obtained from five surveys was not used because of the blatant misinformation given by those households and the information obtained in the other fifty-eight household surveys was accepted knowing that some of the respondents minimized their land holdings.

Even with the known bias in the information given there is much to be learned about community land holdings from the data obtained. The household survey is also an illustrative tool measuring the amount of trust various community members had in my stated reasons for living among them and how my identity underwent a transformation during the course of the year spent there. Some individuals initially thought I was somehow related to the CIA or a member of the DEA working in conjunction with the Dominican authorities. Since I was constantly walking through the *municipio*, asking

questions, taking notes, and was being funded by something called the *Fundación Interamericana* (clearly a front organization), this was, for a few individuals a logical interpretation for my presence in the region.

In June 1989, several of the local fishing vessels were seized by Dominican authorities and their crews imprisoned for smuggling drugs. One of the newly assigned police lieutenants in the community brought up my name in a private meeting asking whether or not I was somehow involved with the local drug smuggling ring. Hence, in the eyes of at least one community member the young foreigner in their midst was transformed from being a DEA agent to a *narcotraficante*. Again, such a question in this context was understandable.

My actions were not those of a regular tourist who stayed at the resort. Research requirements demanded occasional voyages with various fishing vessels berthed in the port be made (luckily not with either of the crews arrested for trafficking), and my constant presence on the town dock seemed to indicate an inordinate interest in the comings and goings of the local fishermen. I had fortunately, unbeknownst to me at the time, befriended a *luperonense* who actually was an undercover informant for the Dominican National Police. He made it clear to the authorities during this meeting the reason for my presence in the community, that the Dominican Coast Guard *commandante* in Puerto Plata had given me verbal permission to accompany the fishermen of Luperón, and that I had never gone out of port with any of the fishermen arrested. After the meeting was held my friend suggested that sailing with the offshore fleet be curtailed until suspicions died down. Later in the year, just before leaving the community, my guardian told me the whole story of what had transpired and the role he had played in the meeting on my behalf.

I was viewed variously by community members as a tourist, as a member of the hotel staff, and finally, as a "partial" member of the community. Becoming a "partial" member of the community occurred when I became engaged to my wife. My interest



and questions concerning the townspeople were validated in the eyes of many inhabitants by becoming engaged to a *luperonensa*, and later holding our wedding in the community. I was no longer just a foreign transient; rather, roots had been established in the community social structure.

This was both a blessing and hindrance. My wife comes from a large family and now claims of kinship with hundreds of individuals in the *municipio* could be made. Generally, this led to an improvement in the quality of my data. On the other hand, some community members had previous grievances with members of my wife's family and marrying into the family made me suspect. This resulted in a few doors being closed to my inquiries. Such are the problems of identification of an anthropologist in the field; no matter how one tries to remain neutral and open, the process of befriending one person can result in the alienation of another.

I forswore a lengthy period of reviewing Dominican land titles and documents, whose accuracy is dubious at best, in the time allotted to me in favor of spending hours visiting my informants' *conucos*, pastures, and farms to learn more about local agricultural practices. Clausner's comprehensive analysis of Dominican land tenure throughout history shows that as recently as 1960, "50.2 percent of all farms in the country were less than 1 hectare in size" and that these small holdings constituted "only 4.7 percent of the total farm land" (1973:239). On the other hand, "one percent of the farms were over 50 hectares in size" and that these large holdings "constituted 53.6 percent of the total farm land" (Clausner 1973:239). The 1962 Agrarian Reform Law, which created the Dominican Agrarian Institute (IAD), was designed to help agrarian reform through the redistribution of State land to hundreds of thousands of landless Dominicans and to those Dominicans whose holdings were considered to be *minifundia* [classified as being 15 *tareas* or less] (Clausner 1973:275). Unfortunately, land reform has come slowly. For example, almost 30 years after the Agrarian Reform Law was passed approximately 82 percent of those employed in agriculture hold 12 percent of the

land, while only 2 percent of the owners control 55 percent of the arable land (Sánchez Roa 1989:107).

Agricultural production is highly inefficient and much of the agricultural production has shifted to produce for a growing export market. Over 43 percent of the arable land in the country is presently being used as pasture for cattle raised for the export market (World Bank 1992:200). Meanwhile, the government has reduced aid to small farmers whose holdings are less than 160 *tareas* (Sánchez Roa 1991:19). Since it is these small farmers who produce largely for the internal market, food supplies have suffered. The Dominican Republic has become the eighth highest ranked recipient of food aid in Latin America (Doughty 1992:148). Between 1963 and 1980, only 67,000 Dominican families were given land from state holdings (Black 1986b:244). Even with the Agrarian Reform Law being in place since 1962 the number of landless Dominicans is growing and it is estimated that there are over half a million rural families who would qualify for land in any redistribution project (Black 1986b:244). For many of the rural poor the only hope is to find work in a city. This is indicated by the fact that over 60 percent of the population now lives in an urban setting compared to 35 percent in 1965 (World Bank 1992:278).

I did make a few minor oversights in my quest for information surrounding land tenure and agricultural practices. My community household survey's section concerning land tenure described fallow land as *sin cultivo*. I wanted to elicit responses about the land which was presently idle. However, it appears that those *luperonenses* polled considered the term to mean untended land that was never cultivated or used for grazing. Overgrown thickets, heavily forested land on the hilltops or *monte*, *arroyos*, and coastal wetlands were what *luperonenses* considered to be *sin cultivo*. This interpretation escaped notice when I was pre-testing my survey document and should be kept in mind when reviewing the present data.

Questions concerning land tenure, agricultural practices, and livestock were only a small part of the general information elicited in my household survey. Questions concerning respondents and household members' work or past work in tourism related businesses were covered as well as questions regarding their opinions on the role tourism had as a catalyst for community economic growth and social change. Questions relating to household composition, marital status, and economic activities of all members of the household were asked. Educational backgrounds of the head of household and members were also recorded. Whether or not any family members were living in other locations of the country or abroad was information also asked in the questionnaire in an attempt to learn more about the migratory practices of local residents. The average length of time needed to record all this information and give adequate explanations to the respondents' numerous questions concerning the reason for asking these questions, their potential use, and reassure some individuals that all information was confidential, as well as drink the ubiquitous cup of coffee the typically courteous hosts would offer, ran between one and one-half hours to two hours per household.

How individual households were selected to be included in my household survey needs to be discussed. In the beginning of 1989 the whole town of Luperón was mapped by me with all structures being included in a census conducted street by street. Both business establishments, government offices, and private residences were included in this census. Those structures which housed both businesses and residences were listed in both categories. The type of building materials and amenities were categorized for each structure at this time.

In February 1989, and again in late November and early December of that same year, business censuses were conducted in the community which examined the size, location, and type of businesses found in the community. This same type of census was again conducted in January 1992 when I returned to the community. In late August

and early September 1989, the residence census was again updated with emphasis being made to determine the validity of earlier information and to include the recent introduction of private telephones into the community. It was discovered at that time that there were 663 occupied residential structures in the community of Luperón. This was to form the basis of selecting which households were to be surveyed.

The goal was to obtain a representative sample of households based on community class distinctions. Housing proved to be an excellent indicator of economic status in Luperón because *luperonense* upward mobility meant house improvements. Knowing the number of houses with dirt floors, wood floors, cement floor, *yagua* walls, *tabla* walls, cement block walls, number of rooms, etc., it was relatively simple for me to figure what percentage of homes representing the combined attributes would be needed for a representative sample. The initial goal was to interview 66 households which would result in a sample population of 10 percent of the community. Due to time constraints I only interviewed 63 households and ended up using only 58 of the surveys as mentioned above. Nonetheless, the sample population is a representative one as the data in Table 3 in Chapter Four illustrates.

The 663 houses were divided into groups based on combinations of floor, siding, and roof materials. Each house in a specific category was assigned a number on a list. For instance, there were 89 houses in the community with packed dirt floors, *yagua* siding, and *cana* thatch roofs and each was given a number from 1 to 89. The numbers were placed in a hat and drawn in a random sort. Since approximately 13 percent of all houses in Luperón had this type of construction, plans were laid to approximate this number in my sample so that each housing combination in the sample would be representative of the total. In actuality, only 8 household heads living in houses of this construction type (12.7 percent of my original sample) were interviewed and information from one of these households was not used because of reliability problems. Ultimately, data from seven households in this category was obtained which



represented 12 percent of my total sample of 58 households. Other households included in my sample population were selected in a similar manner.

One obvious problem with the sample was that no homes without latrines, which included some of the poorest and youngest households, were included. This was a minor oversight on my part. Because households were selected primarily based on house construction materials an interesting segment of Luperón households, the newly established households (2 houses) and the extremely poor households (2 houses) who could not even afford the cost of wood to build a latrine, were overlooked. While insignificant statistically, representing less than one percent of all households (.6 %), it would have been interesting to have had more information from this small subset of Luperón's social structure.

Attempts to collect data for the household survey encountered the typical problems of the fieldworker. While there is no particular wealthy section of town (even the affluent areas had poor dwellings located within their midst), there are several particularly poor ones. The squatter areas of El Salado and near the western edge of Avenida 16 de Agosto were limited in the number of households included in the sample (three households, one from 16 de Agosto and two from El Salado) to reflect their total number of households in the total population.

Going to a house and finding no one at home or the senior adult not willing to be interviewed was another problem. If no one was home, a repeat trip was planned at a later date. If the household head did not want to be interviewed, the request was respected and another household was drawn at random from the list. In only one case did I find three household heads reluctant to be interviewed in a row; however, on the fourth try the household head granted an interview.

The fishing survey used in both Luperón and Cambiaso posed few sampling problems since almost all full-time and part-time fisher folk known to reside in the community, or sail out of Luperón in the case of the offshore fleet members, were

included. This represented almost a 100 percent response rate. The only individuals not included in the survey were a few individuals who fished from the shore on a sporadic basis mainly for subsistence and recreational purposes, and three members of one inshore fishing fleet boat crew who were in jail awaiting trial on marijuana drug trafficking charges. The offshore fishing boat crew jailed in June 1989 for trafficking in cocaine had only arrived recently in Luperón, coming originally from Puerto Plata, and I had no opportunity (luckily) to get to know anyone from that crew prior to their arrest.

Generally, the fisher folk were receptive to being interviewed. Having had a lot of interaction with many of the fisher folk over the course of 1989, by the end of October most had long become accustomed to my endless inquiries surrounding their profession. Seeing me going to sea and fishing with various individuals hopefully led them to believe that I loved the sea, respected their occupation, and had some affinity for their livelihood and problems. Whatever the reason, those fisher folk asked to be interviewed readily complied. The survey included questions dealing with crew membership and activities, location of fishing, length of trips, seasonality, fishing methods employed and preferred manner of harvesting marine species, marketing arrangements, prices received for catch according to species, household composition, house structure and amenities, personal data, land tenure, and whether or not the individual owned any livestock.

The tourist survey was a questionnaire given to various guests at the Luperón Beach Resort throughout the year in 1989. Starting in the February 1989, I tried to obtain a representative sample of guests present at the resort every two or three weeks. This posed several sampling problems. Having explained my interest in gathering information about hotel guest composition by nationality and tour group, the director of the hotel told the workers at the front desk to give me general figures whenever I asked, but names and room numbers were withheld for the protection of the guests' privacy.

Representatives from AirTours, Regency, TUI, Traffic, Fischer-Reisen, were willing to give me data concerning numbers of their charges at the resort at any one time. They would tell me how many guests came as families, how many came together as groups of friends, and information concerning gender. Knowing the total number of guests at the resort, how many belonged to each tour agency, and the approximate number of male and female guests in each tour group, I could then calculate how many from each group should be interviewed.

I would select individuals from each tour group to be interviewed on the morning they were preparing to leave for the airport. I worked out an arrangement with the tour representatives that, whenever they were not too pressed for time, I would have a hat full of numbers and pull numbers at random from the hat with each number representing a person on the tour representatives list. They would then give me a name of an individual to be interviewed. If I pulled numbers representing more than one member of a family traveling together another draw from the hat would be taken. Only one individual per family was surveyed and attempts were made to limit responses from only one member of any groups of friends traveling together as well. Sufficient numbers were drawn until ten percent of the departing group were selected for structured interviews with representative numbers of both sexes included. No one traveling with parents and under the age of eighteen was interviewed.

There were several flaws in this sampling method. Age was not selected for and it was hoped the random draw would be sufficient to sample a wide range of ages. This method was time consuming and demanded a large degree of help on the part of the tour representatives. The German tour representatives did not stay at the resort and I could only meet briefly with them the morning they came to take the tourists to the airport. I also had no method of conducting a random sample of individuals who came to the resort not affiliated with any tour.

There were only a small number of nontour group tourists who stayed at the resort during 1989, but I wanted to include a proportional number of their responses in my data. The problem was discovering who they were. Whenever it came to my attention that such individuals were guests at the resort a special attempt was made to contact them and have them fill out my short two page questionnaire. I knew how many individuals were guests not affiliated with tour groups by contacting the front desk, but meeting these individuals was difficult. My only recourse was to take opportunistic samples of such individuals whenever I could. For instance, the hotel experienced an large influx of Dominican guests during *semana santa* and several of these Dominicans complied graciously with my request to be interviewed. All guests interviewed were told the purpose of my survey and how the results would be used.

The tourist questionnaire asked respondents about their nationality, occupations, traveling companions, length of stay, and reasons for coming to the Dominican Republic/Luperón Beach Resort. Other questions were asked concerning the activities the respondents had engaged in while at the hotel. Had they visited the town of Luperón, bought tourist goods in the town, eaten in town restaurants (frequency of meals had in the town), bought any nontourist consumer items such as medicines, food, drink, tools, etc.), engaged in any formal tours leaving from the hotel and what type of tours? Finally, answers to questions concerning tourist satisfaction in the holiday at the resort and in general on tourism in the Dominican Republic were noted. Any additional comments were recorded when the tourist desired to provide further information.

The tour agency visitors were always interviewed on the day they were scheduled to leave and interviews were usually conducted in the hotel lobby while the guests were waiting for the bus to take them to the airport. Interviews were conducted in English, German, and Spanish. Three hundred twelve of these short questionnaires were completed from February to December 1989. Peak winter tourist season, peak summer



season, off spring season, and off autumn season visitors were all included in this sample. Only one individual per family was asked to be interviewed.

Many open-ended interviews were also given during the course of the 1989 fieldwork season. Members of the *Luperón sociedad para limpieza y embellicimiento* (LSLE) were interviewed in detail about their organization and its goals. Most of the meetings of this organization were attended and I helped in this organization's initial project. Restaurant owners, tourist shop owners, local fish intermediaries, fisher folk, town politicians, civil servants, local medical specialists and private citizens often gave me opportunities to have long discussions concerning town issues, tourist behavior, and townspeople's attitudes towards tourism. Several of the senior administrative staff at the Luperón Beach Resort, as well as numerous other hotel personnel, allowed me to interview them in an informal manner. The director of the hotel was both helpful and extremely courteous in my requests for information about the hotel and plans for future tourist growth in the surrounding area.

In sum, a wide variety of methods were employed to gather sufficient data for this dissertation. More data was collected in a subsequent visit to the town of Luperón in 1992, some of which is included in this dissertation. However, the work in 1989 really represents the creation of a base-line set of data to be used in the future to measure both economic and social change in the community of Luperón. One year did not allow for the development of a diachronic perspective, but the groundwork has been laid for a long-term study of the impact of tourism on community structure which is one of my future research goals. Time and size limitations allowed me to present only a fraction of the data compiled in the field in this document. Other data collected will have to find its way into articles, professional papers, and other scholarly outlets. This dissertation represents the combined involvement of hundreds of generous, interested, and considerate people. My heartfelt thanks is extended to all of them.

APPENDIX B  
LUPERÓN'S DEVELOPMENT IN  
THE CONTEXT OF FIVE HUNDRED  
YEARS OF DOMINICAN HISTORY

Introduction

The presence of large-scale tourism and hotel resorts is a new phenomenon in the *municipio* of Luperón. The invasion of the "Golden Horde" that began in 1987 was not, however, the first time foreigners have found hospitality on the shores of the *municipio*. It was in Luperón that Columbus landed in A.D. 1493, accompanied by twelve hundred colonists from Spain, to build the first "permanent" European settlement in the Caribbean. Columbus named the site La Isabela in honor of Queen Isabella I. Here, at this site, the acculturation process frequently referred to as the Columbian Exchange began in all its myriad of facets. Five hundred years later, this brief moment in the colonial history of the Caribbean, the discovery and settlement of La Isabela, is still a source of regional change. The fact that the site of La Isabela is located in Luperón is a source of pride for many inhabitants. However, there is a price to pay in having this historical monument located in the *municipio* that many of the inhabitants cannot, or are not willing, to pay.

It is not by chance that the western borders of the Puerto Plata tourist zone are located in the *municipio* of Luperón. Granted, it has beautiful vistas, pleasant beaches, and friendly inhabitants, but so do other locations much closer to the city of Puerto

Plata. In fact, to people living in Santo Domingo and Santiago, Luperón is considered nothing more than a rural backwater. Several individuals in these communities said, upon learning where I was conducting my research, "Oh, you are living in the frontier."

The tourist resort in Luperón is presently isolated from other tourist ventures. The closest neighboring resort is located more than 30 kilometers by road from the Luperón Beach Resort. What attracted developers and land speculators to this area, and is beginning to attract more and more day tourists as well, are the archaeological ruins of Columbus's La Isabela. This historical site has enormous potential for drawing large numbers of tourists in the near future, particularly with all the promotion that the quincentennial anniversary of the "discovery" is receiving in the world press.

Every tourist brochure I saw detailing the wonders of the Puerto Plata tourist zone promoted the site of La Isabela as an important national treasure. Local tour guides never fail to mention that the Dominican Republic was the "land that Columbus loved" (the fact that Haiti is also part of Hispaniola, and that it was in Haiti in A.D. 1492 that the Spanish first landed and built a temporary settlement, is typically ignored), and that the first Spanish colony in the New World is located in the province of Puerto Plata. Local preparations for the quincentennial anniversary celebration, to be held in 1992 (actually one year early in the case of La Isabela), were well underway in 1989. By the end of 1991, a new church was being finished at the site of La Isabela for the commemorative Mass the Pope will celebrate during his expected visit in October 1992. Furthermore, plans to repair, pave, and widen the main roads to the archaeological site were being finalized in the beginning of 1992, so that visiting dignitaries can easily come to the planned festivities. It is amazing that a poorly situated settlement, lasting only four years A.D. 1493–1497, is the main focus of the area's tourist promotions. The other 496 years are completely ignored. This is unfortunate. The region has played a significant role in both national and international history that goes far beyond the importance of the first four years so touted by Dominican tourist brochures.

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly recount the history of five hundred years of Luperón's history. This is assuredly an exercise in brevity and historical spotlighting. The *municipio* has a long and significant history apart from the brief period when La Isabela was the center of Spanish colonial hopes on the island. Even though most locals are fully cognizant of the important role the region has played in the historical development of the Dominican Republic, few of these historical facts, other than the establishment of La Isabela, are mentioned to tourists. The typical feeling of the *luperonenses* is that foreigners (*americanos*) would not be interested.

Not all tourists are interested in learning about local history. However, during the course of my fieldwork, and stints as an unofficial tour guide, I found that a significant number of tourists did express interest in learning about the region's historical development. Many tourists were fascinated to learn about Luperón's significant contributions to the national historical mosaic. More than once I was asked why local *hoteliers* do not have more historical information about the region available. The answer to this question might lie in the type of tourism the local resort was trying to attract, package tour "mass" tourism. The belief of resort management was that the typical "mass" tourist came for the sea, sand, sun, and fun. The belief that the "typical" tourist did not come to learn about Dominican culture would preclude the necessity of providing this type of information.

Knowledge of local history gives clues to the present cultural ecology of the region, sociocultural beliefs, political structures, and an understanding of how they developed in response to both local, regional, and international forces. I choose to begin this chapter with a quick historical review of what I call the "exploited history of Luperón." This refers to the period when Columbus arrived and when the settlement of La Isabela was occupied. The rest of the chapter will be devoted to an overview of municipal history during the succeeding five centuries. I choose to refer to this period as the "unexploited history of Luperón." At times, the historical accounts will lead the reader



away from the borders of the region for brief periods as local history becomes intertwined with regional, national, and global movements, but the tale will always wind its way back to the *municipio*.

The *municipio* of Luperón has been directly involved in several important historical movements during Dominican history aside from its initial colonization by Columbus and his conquistadors. These warrant special attention in this chapter. These include the role the *municipio* played in supplying the pro-independence troops against the Spanish in the early 1860s during the war of restoration (*La guerra de la Restauración*, 1861-1864). A century later the region again became a battleground. The failed invasions by the pro-democracy forces seeking to overthrow the dictator Trujillo chose to land on the shores of Luperón in 1949, and again in 1959, with horrendous consequences for the individuals involved.

### The Municipio in the Early Years

The *municipio* of Luperón will always have a special place in history. It is the location of the first "permanent" Spanish colony in the western hemisphere and it was at La Isabela that the acculturation process began between the Old World and New World populations began in earnest. Christopher Columbus, returning on his second voyage to the Caribbean in late 1493, found the sailors from the first voyage who had remained at La Navidad after his ship the Santa Maria had foundered on a reef off the northern coast of Haiti dead and the small fort he had constructed at the site burnt and completely destroyed.

Columbus's first voyage had been one of exploration, his second was one of colonization. After leaving the ruins of La Navidad with his seventeen ships, he sailed east seeking a suitable location for his first permanent settlement. After sending out several caravels to search the north coast of Hispaniola for suitable locations, Columbus

selected the mouth of the Bajabonico river as home for the colonists who accompanied him.<sup>1</sup> One reason that this location might have been given preference over others as the site of the first European town on the island of Española was because fate had provided the fleet with unfavorable winds. The historian Americo Lugo noted that Columbus "*volvió allí el 7 de Diciembre siguiente buscando asiento para poblar; pero fuéronle contrarios los vientos, i no pudo pasar al Puerto de Gracias [Luperón's harbor], que está a 5 o 6 Leguas de el de Puerto Plata; i hubo de volver atrás tres Leguas, adonde sale a la Mar un Río Grande i hai vn buen puerto*" (Lugo 1938:263-264). Arriving at the bay, located 160 kilometers to the east of La Navidad with his fleet, he began erecting the port town of La Isabela.<sup>2</sup>

Little is known about the Amerindians who lived in the area at the time of contact. Americo Lugo claims that the town of La Isabela was built close to a Taino village (1938:264). To which of the six major *caciques* on the island the local Amerindians claimed principal allegiance to is unclear. Most likely it was to Guarionex, or his close

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<sup>1</sup> Actually, according to Bartolomé de las Casas one of the central reasons for selecting La Isabela as the location for the first settlement was its proximity to the gold fields of the Cibao. A short voyage through the pass in the mountains of the Cordillera Septentrional, near present day town of Los Hidalgos, and the river Yaque del Norte was accessible. Just beyond the river, the gold fields of Santo Tomás were located in the foothills of the Cordillera Central (1909:154-155).

<sup>2</sup> The site of La Isabela may have been first "discovered" by the captain of the Pinta, Martín Alonso Pinzón, on the first voyage during his famous solo expedition when he deserted Columbus. Las Casas mentioned that Pinzón had spent sixteen days trading with the Amerindians for gold at a place he called the Río de Gracias and that this location was only a short distance to the sources of gold on the island. Columbus later anchored at this site on his return part of his first voyage. He noted its good anchorage by the mouth of a river. He mentioned that this site was three leagues to the southeast of Punta Roja (Punta Rucia?). The only possible locations could be the mouth of the Río Bajabonico or the Río Jaiba which is much smaller and provides poor anchorage. The diary also comments that this location had a lot of shipworm. Could this be the first visit of Columbus to the *municipio* of Luperón? I find that the geographical descriptions Columbus gives in his diary make it almost certain it was. (Las Casas 1989:322-323)

ally Mayobanex, both of whom controlled vast territories nearby. The historian Ursula Lamb supports this position and wrote that the territory where La Isabela was founded was under the control of the *cacique* Guarionex (1956:91).

Contemporary accounts mention that the indigenous inhabitants made the Spaniards welcome. Chanca, a doctor who accompanied Columbus on his second voyage and who was responsible for the colonists' health at La Isabela, mentioned that many natives came to visit, both males and females, bringing food and information to the Spaniards (Chanca 1932:61). Archaeologist Kathleen Deagan believes that the region was densely populated by the Taino at the time of contact (1988:207). The fact that both Taino and Spanish remains have been found buried in the Spanish cemetery at La Isabela suggests that, at least initially, relations between the two groups was cordial and that they intermingled freely.

There is other evidence in the *municipio* of Luperón of a large Taino population living in the region at the time of contact. Remains of Taino pottery and ceramics abound in the region. Local farmers working in their fields frequently recover small shards. Many of the larger pieces adorned with faces or intricate patterns are sold by inhabitants to local shops where tourists purchase these antiquities. Initially, I believed that many of these ceramic pieces were fakes because of the multitude available in the shops. However, when discussing the authenticity of these artifacts with Kathleen Deagan, she informed me that the majority of Taino artifacts found in local shops are genuine (1989: personal communication). Traditionally, these artifacts were difficult to purchase in rural areas of the country. Many rural Dominicans believed these Taino ceramic pieces had magical powers to protect one from pains of evil origin and had the power to keep urns of drawn water fresh (Vega 1981:50). Today, ample supplies are available for purchase by tourists. I did notice several households in Luperón which had Taino artifacts prominently displayed. However, whether they were kept for decoration, or for their magical properties, was never clearly determined.



The exact number of Amerindian inhabitants living on Hispaniola at the time of contact is open to speculation. Population estimates range from the high figure of 3,000,000, cited by Las Casas (1951), to the rather conservative figure of 100,000 (Rosenblatt 1954). Kathleen Deagan, co-director of the archaeological reconstruction of La Isabela, believes the Taino population of Hispaniola to have been in the range of "several million" at the time of contact in A.D. 1492. This figure is based on the computation of archaeological site densities encountered in the few areas that have been thoroughly surveyed on Hispaniola (1988:197-198). Dominican historian Frank Moya Pons arrives at a much lower figure of around 600,000 Taino inhabitants (1977:62). Whether one accepts the higher or lower estimates is of little importance here, the fact remains that Taino population numbers plummeted catastrophically in the years immediately following contact and their eradication in the course of a few decades amounts to one of the worst cases of genocide in the historical record.

By 1515, the indigenous population on the island had been reduced to fewer than 25,000 inhabitants (Sauer 1966:200-201). The original Taino population was augmented by the importation of many Amerindians who had been enslaved on other islands. They were brought to Hispaniola to work in the gold mines. According to Moya Pons, more than 40,000 Amerindian laborers were transported from such places as the Bahamas, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico between 1508-1513 to work for the Spanish (1977:62). It made little difference. The original inhabitants of Hispaniola, and those Amerindians imported from other Caribbean islands, died equally rapidly. In 1518, a smallpox epidemic further reduced a small and weakened population of Amerindians on the island to around 3,000 individuals (Moya Pons 1977:68). In less than thirty years, one of the "most densely settled prestate, sedentary societies in the New World" had been completely eradicated from the face of the earth (Deagan 1988:196).

The first colonists at La Isabela fared only a little better than the Amerindians. The first months at La Isabela were exceedingly trying for the Spaniards. February, 1494,



saw over half the colonists sick and the supplies of food brought from Europe were running low (Wilson 1990:78). Columbus sent twelve of his seventeen ships back to Spain loaded with gold, parrots, and enslaved Amerindians. Along with these goods he sent a plea for more supplies (Wilson 1990:78). According to various letters written by Columbus, local Amerindians supplied the colonists with ample stores of *ages* (yams or sweet manioc) and cassava bread, but still the Spaniards became ill and suffered from hunger (Columbus 1961:61-65).

During the same period, Spanish expeditions seeking gold had been sent inland to find the gold mines rumored to abound in the interior. They found gold in the Cibao region and favorable reports of rich gold regions fueled the colonists' greed. Columbus, himself, led a large army of soldiers and accompanying Amerindians into the Cibao region in search of gold in March, 1494 (Wilson 1990:78-80). Those Spaniards too weak to march remained at La Isabela, where they continued to suffer acutely from disease and hunger, and a number died during this period (Moya Pons 1977:56).

Columbus founded the *fortaleza* Santo Tomás near the site of promising gold fields during his exploration of the Cibao region in 1494. Upon returning to La Isabela from his first expedition inland, Columbus found the settlement at La Isabela seething with discontent. Illness had taken its toll, killing many Spaniards, and most colonists remaining at La Isabela were suffering from a combination of maladies. Dissension against Columbus's leadership was growing among the *hidalgos*. They blamed the diseases which had affected most of the colonists on overwork. Columbus demanded that every man, regardless of whether they were nobility or commoner, help in the construction of the town. Most colonists at La Isabela were interested in finding gold and becoming rich and not in building a permanent settlement. Parry and Sherlock maintain that even an excellent administrator would have found it difficult to control these early conquistadors:

It would have taken a leader of commanding genius to maintain discipline among those early Spanish settlers—touchy, adventurous and greedy as they were—to compel them to clear the forest, build houses, and plant crops instead of roaming about the island in search of gold or of slaves. Great explorer and sea commander, brilliant navigator though he was, Columbus had neither the experience nor the temperament of a successful colonial governor. (1971:7-8)

Columbus treated his rebellious colonists with ruthless efficiency. Less than one month after founding La Isabela the first revolt, led by the company's chief accountant Bernal de Pisa, was put down. Columbus arrested Pisa and hanged several other mutineers (Deagan 1992:48). In 1496, Columbus returned to Spain leaving his brother Bartolomew in charge of the colony. One of the first things Bartolomew did was to begin relocating colonists from La Isabela to the south coast of Hispaniola (Parry and Sherlock 1971:8). Here, he founded Santo Domingo. Santo Domingo provided a better harbor, healthier climate, and was located closer to the majority of the gold fields being exploited by the colonists.

Before Bartolomew left for Santo Domingo, he appointed Francisco Roldán to be in charge of the settlement at La Isabela. With Roldán as mayor, the end of La Isabela came quickly. Francisco Roldán and his followers at La Isabela took advantage of the Columbus brothers absence and revolted against their authority. Outfitted with supplies from the storehouses at La Isabela, Roldán and his followers allied themselves with several Amerindian *caciques* and left La Isabela permanently (Deagan 1992:51). Settling in the western part of Hispaniola, Roldán and his followers refused to recognize the authority of the Columbus brothers until 1498, when Roldán reached a tenuous peace through negotiations with Christopher Columbus upon his return to Hispaniola from Spain.

By 1498, La Isabela was deserted. The economic focus of the colony centered on the Cibao region and the south coast. The area around La Isabela was no longer an important colonial center. A few towns remained viable on the north coast of

Hispaniola, but little land beyond their pale was cultivated. A few *estancias* (ranches) were probably in operation in the area of Luperón during the sixteenth century, but little is documented concerning the economic life in the region between 1498 and 1606.

### Luperón during the Interim Years: 1500-1863

After the rebellion of Roldán and his followers, Spanish attention turned away from La Isabela. For a brief time the Crown focused on the gold fields and newly introduced sugar plantations of Española. But as the yields from the gold mines dwindled, so too did the royal revenues from the colony, and the Spanish Crown's interest in the colony dwindled as discoveries of vast wealth on the American mainland came to its attention. During the first two decades of the sixteenth century, the Cibao region was important as the center for gold mining. Areas in the Cibao not containing gold were used for agricultural and the grazing of livestock. These areas produced the food necessary to feed the workers laboring in the mines.

Large tracts of land surrounding the Cibao were depopulated of Amerindians as the difficult work at the mines demanded a constant source of fresh laborers (Antonini 1968:48-49). Disease and despair took their toll as well. The Spanish Crown had issued proclamations designed to protect the property and lives of the indigenous inhabitants of Santo Domingo in the early sixteenth century. In 1509, the Crown sent instructions that the Amerindians were to be treated as free workers, not slaves, and that their work contracts with individual Spaniards were to be limited to no more than two or three years (Clausner 1973:23). Even the best plans of the Crown often were often ineffectively implemented in the colonies. The treatment of the Amerindians of Santo Domingo was a perfect example of the difference between *hecho* and *derecho*, or the "difference between the execution of royal policy in the colonies and the concepts on which the policy had been formulated in Spain" (Clausner 1973:49). By 1520 the

number of Amerindians on Hispaniola numbered less than one thousand (Moya Pons 1986:16). After the gold ran out, few Spaniards chose to remain in the colony. New riches had been discovered in the lands of the mainland Maya and Aztec and many went to look for riches there. After 1530, the majority of colonists remaining on Española resided in the southern coastal area near Santo Domingo, or in the interior towns of La Vega and Santiago. The port towns of Monte Cristi and Puerto Plata remained occupied on the north coast; their main function being to protect and supply the Cibao region from the unwanted intrusions by other European powers. The hinterlands between the Cibao and these northern port towns became, for the most part, the haunt of feral cattle and pigs.

During the 1520s, the Spanish Crown attempted to control the depopulation of Santo Domingo by issuing orders prohibiting the emigration of its inhabitants. At the same time, the Crown tried to entice potential colonists to Hispaniola with attractive resettlement offers. The Royal Ordinance of 1525 offered "free passage, and the authorization for each white person of owning six negroes, in place of one only, which was permitted before" (Moreau de Saint-Mery 1944:221). The Crown's attempt at largesse failed to stem the island's depopulation. Few new settlers arrived, and thousands of colonists were to leave during the 1520s, despite the travel ban. A few Spaniards remained as sugar planters and cattle ranchers, but the population declined, as did the importance of the colony, steadily throughout the sixteenth century.

Significant numbers of African slaves were introduced to Santo Domingo beginning in 1518. Initially, they had been introduced to work in the gold mines. With the depletion of the gold supplies, the importance of sugar as the primary export of Española began. These African slaves were employed in the fields of the sugar plantations located along the coastal plains near Santo Domingo. Columbus first introduced sugar to the New World during his second voyage in 1493 (Williams 1970:25). He brought it to Española from the Canary islands. It was first planted at La



Isabela and flourished in the local climate (Columbus 1961:78). The commercial hopes of the colonists on Española from the 1520s onward focused on the production of sugar for the European market. To produce this cash crop substantial numbers of African slaves were imported. During the years between 1520 and 1550, approximately one thousand African slaves were imported to the colony annually (Bell 1981:21).

The slave population rapidly outnumbered that of the free colonists. Moya Pons concludes that in 1546 there were approximately 12,000 African slaves and 5,000 free inhabitants of Spanish origin on Española (1974:5). Conditions for the slaves working on the sugar plantations were extremely harsh during this period. Slaves revolts and attacks by autonomous maroon bands were a common threat to the Spanish colonists on Española during the sixteenth century:

Como el sistema de plantaciones obligaba a los negros a trabajar violentamente, no tardaron en producirse las rebeliones. La primera, ocurrida en 1522, fue reprimida ahorcando a los rebeldes o friéndolos en alquitrán. Otras rebeliones siguieron durante unos quince años y llegaron a poner en peligro toda la economía colonial, pues llegó un momento, entre 1537 y 1544, que los negros cimarrones eran más que los mismos pobladores españoles de la Colonia. Sin embargo, rápidas y eficaces campañas militares lograron pacificar la Isla y los españoles pudieron imponerse sobre las grandes masas de la población esclava. (Moya Pons 1986:17)

During this period the royal monopoly on all trade made it increasingly difficult for the colonists trying to run plantations to obtain new slaves and other goods necessary to maintain the sugar industry of Española. The Spanish Crown retained the exclusive right to trade with its colonies, and this monopoly controlled all trade and navigation routes between Spain and its colonies, and between the colonies themselves (Williams 1970:51). Spain's mercantile doctrine was designed to prevent the drain of bullion to foreign countries, preserve profits for the King, and maintain the nation's wealth by hoarding precious metals (Haring 1966:7). Initially, all ports of Española were open to trade with authorized Spanish merchants. Soon the Spanish Crown believed that too much of its legal revenue was not being collected due to smuggling and corruption; so

that, by the mid-sixteenth century, all goods leaving and entering Española had to be funneled through the port of Santo Domingo.

Increasingly frustrated by this legal stranglehold on commerce, and seeking an outlet for their agricultural produce and hides, the colonists living on the north coast of Española began to rely more and more on illegal trade with Portuguese, English, French, and Dutch merchants. The isolated communities on the north coast, which bordered international shipping lanes, could easily engage in this illicit trade with little interference from colonial authorities. In fact, many Spanish port officials covertly traded with the foreign "interlopers, while overtly appearing to be rigidly adhering to the formal ban on trade" (Haring 1966:26).

#### Luperón and the Trade in Contraband

The many natural harbors and inlets around the port towns of Monte Cristi and Puerto Plata became centers for smuggling goods into the colony during the sixteenth century. At the time this area was known as the *Banda del Norte*, which referred to the north coast region stretching from present day Haiti to the eastern edge of Puerto Plata province (Moya Pons 1977:112). The rugged coast of Luperón, with its many suitable beaches, was utilized as a place for the unloading of illegal commerce throughout the sixteenth century. One common method of trade, likely engaged in by the inhabitants living in the region around Luperón, was sloop-trade. C. H. Haring described this trade as being "managed by sloops which hovered near some secluded spot on the coast, often at the mouth of a river, and informed the inhabitants of their presence in the neighbourhood by firing a shot from a cannon" (1966:27). The inhabitants would then row out to these sloops and trade locally produced goods such as beef, leather, ginger, and sugar for imported merchandise which the English, Portuguese, French, and Dutch merchants had on board.

One documented account of Luperón's shores being utilized by smugglers is the case of the Englishman Captain John Hawkins. Captain Hawkins is known to history as a slaver, part-time privateer, part-time trader, and later, as an English naval hero who helped defeat the Spanish Armada in 1588. In 1563, he arrived in the Caribbean with three hundred slaves which he had purchased from the Portuguese in Sierra Leone, West Africa. He went to the north coast of Española and wanted to trade legally with the Spanish authorities. Attempting to trade at Puerto Plata, he was "officially" warned that this was prohibited and expelled from the port by local colonial authorities. Sailing further to the west, he landed at La Isabela, now virtually abandoned, and completed the exchange with the full cognizance of the Spanish authorities in Puerto Plata. He traded his slaves for a large volume of sugar and hides.

He had hoped to initiate normal trading relations with the Spanish colonial officials of Santo Domingo and made sure to pay all the local import duties and taxes required by law. Believing that the Spanish government would not molest his cargo, he even went so far as to send half his purchase of hides back to Europe on Spanish ships. Furthermore, he left one hundred slaves in Hispaniola on deposit with the colonial authorities of the island (Haring 1966:38). To Hawkins dismay, the authorities in Spain refused to honor the arrangement and ordered the slaves left on Hispaniola as forfeit to punish him for trading illegally (Moya Pons 1977:102). Spain was not yet ready to allow its monopoly on trade with its colonies to be broken.

Little else is known about Luperón during the sixteenth century. One can safely assume that other foreign traders landed on its shores in their quest to circumnavigate the Spanish monopoly on trade with the residents of Española. Parry and Sherlock mention that Isabela played a prominent role in the north coast's illicit trade during the sixteenth century:

Isabela, Columbus's early foundation on the north coast of Hispaniola, was a favorite and characteristic haunt of smugglers. The place had dwindled to a mere hamlet, but behind it lay a

fertile region of ranches and sugar plantations known then as La Vega, where slaves were in high demand and where return cargoes of sugar and hides could be obtained. The area was separated from Santo Domingo by a wide stretch of rough country, and the danger of official interference was very small. The activities of smugglers, by their nature, are not officially recorded so long as they are successful, so that evidence is scanty; but there is little doubt that considerable numbers of slaves entered the West Indies by such channels; and with the slaves came cargoes of European goods—wine, oil, tools, cloth, paper, and so on—from Teneriffe, Las Palmas, or Lisbon itself. (1971:28-29)

From the passage above, one can deduce that the case of Captain Hawkins was not an isolated case.

How many inhabitants did the region around Luperón support during the sixteenth century? What were their occupations? The historical record is largely blank. One can only surmise that involvement in the lucrative smuggling business directly employed a number of the inhabitants. Others may have hunted feral cattle for their hides. Others, still, likely cultivated small plots of land to meet their subsistence needs.

It is probable that Luperón was the home for one or more *hatos* (ranches), where tame stock, referred to as *mansa*, were raised. G. A. Mejía, in his Historia de Santo Domingo, cited Bartolomé Cepero y Gaspar de Xuara's "Memorial de 1608" as claiming that the whole *Banda del Norte* contained no fewer than one hundred and twenty ranches at the end of the sixteenth century (1952:573). The fertile soils, well-watered by the Bajabonico river, would have been an excellent region for cattle and horse breeding. These activities play an important economic role in the region today and it is likely they did the same at an earlier time.

While there is no supporting evidence, it is possible that some of the local inhabitants would have worked as muleteers during the sixteenth century. Since no roads capable of handling wheeled vehicles were in existence, this type of occupation would have been a necessity to transport contraband inland and to bring agricultural products from the Cibao, such as sugar and hides, over the Cordillera Septentrional to the coast. One



of the major routes would have been through the "Puerta de los Hidalgos," the mountain pass established by Columbus in 1494, which was still one of the main routes between the Cibao and Puerto Plata during the latter part of the nineteenth century (Hazard 1873:372).

Smuggling was so prevalent along the north coast of Hispaniola during the sixteenth century that Spanish authorities sought to curtail its existence by draconian measures. In 1603, Spain initiated a policy to designed to thwart smuggling. Royal mandates (*cédulas*) decreed that all towns of the *banda del norte* should be destroyed and their inhabitants removed, forcibly if necessary, to either the south coast near Santo Domingo, or to sites in the interior such as Santiago and La Vega. The royal mandates of August 6, August 7, August 23, October 15, November 29, and December 12, 1603, were rigidly enforced between 1605 and 1606 by colonial authorities under the leadership of Governor Antonio Osorio (Rodriguez Demorizi 1945:115).

Monte Cristi, Puerto Plata, La Yaguana, Bayajá, and San Juan de la Maguana were the five major towns in the northern and western parts of the island ordered destroyed. The *cédulas* of October 15, 1603, and November 29, 1603, specifically referred to the destruction of the town of Puerto Plata, its depopulation, and the resettlement of those inhabitants residing in, or near, its environs (Lugo 1938:116-117). The plans called for the residents of Puerto Plata to be resettled in the south, along with the unwilling immigrants from Monte Cristi, in one location near Santo Domingo. Forced to move, they founded the town of Monteplata (Peña Pérez 1985:143). It is unlikely that this resettlement policy yielded much by the way of increased revenue for the Spanish Crown as "within the region, fields were left uncultivated, and the farms were depopulated; the houses were going to ruin, with closed doors, their occupants having deserted them; the duties and taxes that could be collected by the Government amounted to absolutely nothing" (Hazard 1873:65).

### La Despoblación: Luperón in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

The seventeenth century was a period of stagnation for the colony of Santo Domingo. With the failure of the colony's sugar industry due to successful foreign competition, which had been economic mainstay of the colony during the sixteenth century, the few remaining colonists could not afford much by way of European luxuries and trade dwindled. The population was so poor, and the economy of the island in such shambles during the seventeenth century, that one Dominican historian, Frank Peña Pérez, called his history of the colony during this time, Cien Años de Miseria en Santo Domingo (One Hundred Years of Misery in Santo Domingo).

Table 13: Population in the Dominican Republic 1500 - 1970.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Population</u>     | <u>Year</u> | <u>Population</u> |
|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| 1500        | 360                   | 1819        | 71,223            |
| 1502        | 1,800                 | 1844        | 126,000           |
| 1510        | 10,000                | 1863        | 207,700           |
| 1517        | 3,575                 | 1887        | 382,312           |
| 1528        | 4,000                 | 1908        | 638,000           |
| 1546        | 5,000 + 12,000 slaves | 1920        | 894,665           |
| 1568        | ? + 20,000 slaves     | 1935        | 1,479,417         |
| 1606        | 5,960 + 9,648 slaves  | 1950        | 2,135,872         |
| 1681        | 7,500                 | 1960        | 3,047,070         |
| 1718        | 18,410                | 1970        | 4,006,405         |
| 1739        | 30,058                |             |                   |
| 1769        | 70,625 + 8,900 slaves |             |                   |
| 1783        | 119,600               |             |                   |

Source: Moya Pons 1974. Nuevas consideraciones sobre la historia de la población dominicana: curvas, tasas y problemas. EME EME Estudios Dominicanos 3(15):21.

Table 13 depicts the population growth of the colony of Santo Domingo and the Dominican Republic between 1500 and 1970. In 1606, the population of Española included 5,960 free inhabitants and 9,648 slaves, or a total of 15,608 individuals in the colony. By 1681, the population was only 7,500 individuals. The population of

colonial Santo Domingo showed little change during the sixteenth century and grew just .3 per cent annually between 1606 and 1681 (Moya Pons 1974:21). However, this figure cited by Moya Pons does not account for the slaves listed in the census of 1606. If these individuals are included in the general population figures, the population of the colony actually declined by 52 per cent during the seventy-five years between 1606 and 1681.

With the *banda del norte* and western parts of the island depopulated by the Spanish, it was easy for non-Spanish "interlopers" to trespass in these regions. Throughout the late sixteenth century and seventeenth century a loosely knit community of individuals called *boucaniers*, in reference to their method of drying the meat of feral animals shot on the mainland of Española and curing their hides by smoking them on a *boucan*, resisted Spanish attempts to curtail their activities and eradicate their strongholds.<sup>3</sup> They fought an ongoing battle with the colonial authorities of Santo Domingo for hegemony over the depopulated regions which lasted throughout the seventeenth century. These areas became a no-man's-land where neither the buccaneers (the English corruption of the term *boucanier*), nor Spaniards, were safe from each other's depredations.

Off the north coast of Haiti lies the island of Tortuga. During the seventeenth century, this island acted as a supply depot and safe haven for the buccaneers hunting on Española. While individual buccaneers may have been of French, English, or Dutch background, it was the French authorities in the Caribbean who became the principal supporters of this colony of men living on Tortuga and Española. A community of

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<sup>3</sup> A *boucan* is a Taino word describing a grill used to smoke or dry meat. Samuel Hazard describes a *boucan* as being a grill made of green sticks. The meat would be laid on this grill and slowly smoked, thus preserving the meat so that would not go rancid quickly in the tropical climate. Hazard also mentions that there were two types of *boucaniers*; those that hunted cattle for their hides, and those who specialized in hunting wild pigs whose flesh was salted and sold to passing ships as provisions (1873:72).

Huguenot settlers were established on the island of Tortuga by the French governor of Saint-Christophe in 1639 (Parry and Sherlock 1971:83). Despite the defeat of the French garrison in 1654 by Spanish forces sailing from Puerto Plata, the French were only temporarily halted in implementing their *de facto* control over the western part of Española (Peña Pérez 1985:47).

Mentioned previously was the fact that the Spanish forces used to attack Tortuga in 1654 had sailed from the deserted port of Puerto Plata. The Spanish colonial government quickly came to realize the tactical disadvantage the depopulation of large portions of northern and western parts of Española by Governor Osorio had had in thwarting the threat of invasion by foreign forces. In 1649, Governor Juan Melgarejo Ponce de León wrote the King of Spain pleading to be allowed to repopulate and fortify the northern ports of Bayajá and Puerto Plata (Rodriguez Demorizi 1945:125). Spanish authorities did not allow the resettlement of the north coast, but they did authorize the creation of mobile lancer squadrons in 1640. These squadrons specific function was to protect outlying Spanish villages and harass, or kill, any foreigners caught on the mainland (Parry and Sherlock 1971:82).

Despite all attempts to eradicate the French presence on the western part of Española, their numbers and power increased steadily throughout the seventeenth century. In 1680, Spanish authorities formally recognized France's right to the western third of the island of Hispaniola and the border was established at the Rebouc (Guayabin) river (Moreau de Saint-Mery 1944:11). Soon thereafter, this border was rejected by the Spaniards as extending too deeply into their territory. Border raids and the pillaging of border settlements was renewed. Border disputes escalated throughout the 1680s, and war was officially declared between France and Spain in 1689. This war lasted for most of the next decade until the Treaty of Ryswick, signed in 1697, formally brought it to an end.



The ratification of the Treaty of Ryswick did not bring peace to the border regions. Border disputes continued between the French and Spanish colonial governments in the early eighteenth century. The Spanish government aggressively began to extend its control of the lands west of Rebouc (Guayabin) river. The Spanish established a border garrison on the east bank of the Dajabon river in 1727 (Moreau de Saint-Mery 1944:18). Spanish colonialists again slowly began to settle in the formerly deserted regions between Santiago and the Dajabon river throughout the 1720s and 1730s. The border between the colonies of Santo Domingo and Saint-Domingue was finally delineated in a manner acceptable to both governments with the signing of the Treaty of Aranjuez in 1777 (Moreau de Saint-Mery 1944:28).

Plantation agriculture and the cultivation of cash crops became firmly established in the French colony of Saint-Domingue by the middle of the eighteenth century. With the introduction of a large-scale plantations in Saint-Domingue, there developed an increased demand for meat and traction animals to feed the slaves and power the mills. The growing trade in livestock and other foodstuffs developed between the two colonies throughout the eighteenth century. The sparsely populated colony of Santo Domingo supplied the growing plantation economy of Saint-Domingue, which was producing large quantities of sugar, coffee, and indigo for the world market, with the large quantities of animals and food it needed to keep its plantations running.

According to Table 13, there were only 18,410 inhabitants in all of Santo Domingo in 1739. The Spanish were fearful in the first half of the eighteenth century that the rapid population growth of Saint-Domingue would soon make it impossible for the small numbers of Spanish colonists living in Santo Domingo to successfully resist future French attempts to gain control of all of Española. The Spanish authorities began to augment the depleted population of Santo Domingo by offering free passage and land to any Spanish citizens willing to emigrate.

The Spanish Crown sent the first fifty families to be resettled in 1720, and sent seventy-eight families more in 1725 (Moya Pons 1974:9). Immigrants from the Canary Islands were selected because it was believed that they were more acclimated to the climate of Santo Domingo than people from the Iberian peninsula (Moya Pons 1977:285). The new immigrants were resettled throughout the depopulated regions of Santo Domingo. It was largely with a nucleus of these Canary Islanders that the *banda del norte* was repopulated in the early and middle part of the eighteenth century. Forty families from the Canaries were sent to settle Puerto Plata in 1737. In 1751, 200 more families arrived in Santo Domingo and half of these were sent to repopulate Monte Cristi, while the other half were sent to Puerto Plata (Moya Pons 1974:9).

The city of Puerto Plata was re-established after being deserted of human inhabitants for almost one hundred and forty years. During this time, Puerto Plata had frequently been a staging ground for attacks by both the Spaniards and the filibusters. The Spanish marshalled their forces at Puerto Plata and sailed from that port for their successful attack on the French stronghold of Tortuga in 1654. A combined force of French and English buccaneers landed at Puerto Plata in 1659, and proceeded inland to attack the town of St. Jago (Yago), where they pillaged for twenty-four hours, before being forced to return to the coast by the arrival of Spanish reinforcements (Haring 1966:115).

Throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Hispaniola's northern coast, with its many natural harbors and bays, provided a safe haven for the small boats and ships of many navies. Figure 2, located on page 96, is a copy of a map printed in Charlevoix's *Histoire de l'Isle Espagnole* (1732). It clearly delineates each bay located along the shores of Hispaniola. All the bays in the province of present day Puerto Plata are marked. Both the Bay of La Isabela (Puerto Isabella) and Luperón's Bahía de Gracias (Puerto Cavallo) are clearly marked, which indicates that at that time they were

viewed as safe and important anchorages by the maritime powers sailing those shores during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Table 14: Population of Puerto Plata Province 1739 - 1920.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Population</u> |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 1739        | 500               |
| 1769        | 1,185             |
| 1782        | 9,900             |
| 1819        | 4,534             |
| 1908        | 56,000            |
| 1920        | 58,923            |

Source: Moya Pons 1974. Nuevas consideraciones sobre la historia de la población dominicana: curvas, tasas y problemas. EME EME Estudios Dominicanos 3(15):23-26.

The right of free trade had been accorded the ports of Puerto Plata and Monte Cristi by the Spanish Crown in 1756 (Hazard 1873:177). Soon thereafter the port of Puerto Plata began to prosper and the number of its inhabitants increased rapidly as increased trade opportunities lured both Dominicans and foreign merchants to the town. Table 14 shows that in 1769, there were 1,185 inhabitants living in Puerto Plata. By 1782, there were almost 10,000 people living there. The population figure for 1782 should be reviewed with some skepticism. It is not clear in the article by Moya Pons whether the figure of 10,000 represents the gross population for the district of Puerto Plata, or for the port town. The former is much more likely. Nonetheless, by 1782, the economic importance of Puerto Plata had been firmly reestablished.

When Moreau de Saint-Mery visited Puerto Plata in the late eighteenth century he observed a region (*cantón*) which he believed to be rich in gold, silver, and copper mines (Moreau de Saint-Mery 1944:199). He also stated that gypsum was found in the region. Puerto Plata is not a rich mining region and, except for quantities of amber, has few minerals of commercial value. It could have been that mineral ore from the interior

was shipped from Puerto Plata during the late eighteenth century, leading Moreau de Saint-Mery to believe the district was the source of these minerals.

Moreau de Saint-Mery made the following observations concerning Puerto Plata. He estimated that the population was between 2,000 and 2,500 (Moreau de Saint-Mery 1944:200). This figure is substantially less than the figure given by Moya Pons . This supports my argument that the figure cited by Moya Pons represents the district's population. He also mentioned that the citizens of Puerto Plata had the bad habit of drinking the water of a fever-laden river, which resulted in many of the populace suffering from a variety of illnesses (Moreau de Saint-Mery 1944:200). When Moreau de Saint-Mery visited in 1788, the town was going through a construction boom. Townspeople were in the process of constructing a large Catholic church and he mentioned that the town had wide avenues lined by stone buildings (Moreau de Saint-Mery 1944:200).

After his visit to Puerto Plata, Moreau de Saint-Mery continued his journey west sailing along the coast of the *municipio* of Luperón. He entered the harbor at Cambiaso, which was then called "el Gran Puerto Souffleur" (Moreau de Saint-Mery 1944:201). He describes the sentinel rock, still standing in the middle of the bay, perfectly. He visited Luperón's bay, the Bahía de Gracias, which was then called Puerto Caballo, and wrote the following:

El puerto Caballo sería uno de los más bellos y mejores de esa costa, si la entrada fuera suficientemente profunda; pero no tiene sino nueve pies de agua y un bajo la divida. En él se encuentra un carenero. El navegante goza allí de una perfecta calma y si ruido sordo se deja oír, a penas, en lontananza, eso le hace sospechar que una tempestad excita la furia de las olas. (Moreau de Saint-Mery 1944:201)

The narrow entrance and shallow waters prohibited larger ships from entering the bay, as it still does today. However, the Bahía de Gracias was already being used as a place to dry dock smaller boats for hull repairs. It was also used as a place of refuge by smaller vessels when storms lashed the north coast of Hispaniola. Throughout Moreau



de Saint-Mery's voyage along the coast of Luperón he gives detailed accounts of the littoral geography, but he mentions nothing about those individuals who inhabit the region. It is likely that a few hardy ranchers (*hateros*) and subsistence farmers inhabited the region, but no information is available to validate this conjecture.

#### Santo Domingo 1789-1844: The Haitian Revolution and Occupation

In 1789, the population of Santo Domingo was 125,000 (Wiarda 1969:25). Slavery was still legal, but unlike the colony of Saint-Domingue, the slave population in Santo Domingo during the eighteenth century never constituted more than 30 per cent of the total population (Bell 1981:22). During the next three decades, the inhabitants of Santo Domingo were to experience invasions by foreign powers, annexation, famine, and destruction on a scale never before seen on the island.

The effects of these calamities are reflected in the population figures for the colony. Table No. 1 illustrates the decline in the population of Santo Domingo during these years. In 1783, the total population living in Santo Domingo numbered 119,600. Thirty-six years later, in 1819, the population of Santo Domingo had dropped to 71,223. The population of the district of Puerto Plata was similarly affected, with 9,900 inhabitants in 1782 and only 4,534 in 1819 (see Table No. 2).

The defeat of Spain by the Napoleonic forces in Europe had resulted in Spain ceding the eastern two-thirds of Hispaniola to the French in 1795 as part of the terms cited in the Treaty of Bâle (Basel). For fourteen years Santo Domingo was a possession of France (1795-1809). The successful slave revolt in Saint-Domingue, under the leadership of Toussaint L'Overture, and later, Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Henri Christophe, was not contained in the former French colony. During these years warfare spilled over the borders into Santo Domingo. The island of Hispaniola was caught up in an international struggle between the European powers of France and Great Britain;

with Spain siding, first with the British, then with the French, and later, once more with the British.

Toussaint L'Overture's own affiliations were a reflection of the political confusion affecting Hispaniola during these years. First, he sided with the Spanish authorities of Santo Domingo during the early years of the Haitian slave rebellion. Later, he switched sides and allied himself with France. During this period he successfully led the Haitian forces against the Spanish and routed their forces on Hispaniola. In 1798, after waging a vicious guerrilla war for several years, L'Overture succeeded in driving the British from Hispaniola who had invaded in 1793 as allies of the Spanish (Parry and Sherlock 1972:166). All of this successes were aided by disease, which took a terrible toll in lives of the European troops sent to the island. By 1798, all of the island was under the titular control of the French, whose designated governor was Toussaint L'Overture.

Until 1801, the Spanish-speaking part of Hispaniola, formerly the colony of Santo Domingo, had been spared the worst ravages of war. In this year the forces of Toussaint L'Overture invaded the eastern two-thirds of the island. The Cibao was occupied and the former capital, Santo Domingo, capitulated to forces led by L'Overture (Bell 1981:23). Toussaint L'Overture feared treachery by Napoleon and expected that he would try to reintroduce slavery on Hispaniola. After conquering the whole island, L'Overture declared the island "one and indivisible" (Bell 1981:23).

In 1802, as had been suspected by Toussaint L'Overture, Napoleon sent 58,000 men under the command of General Leclerc to put down the Haitian forces. Leclerc succeeded in capturing Toussaint L'Overture on June 7, 1802 (Moya Pons 1977:334). However, this French invasion ended in failure due to fierce resistance by the Haitian forces and help from their principal ally disease. Official figures state that 50, 270 French soldiers died during this campaign, the majority from yellow fever (Moya Pons 1977:335). The remnants of the French army surrendered to British forces arriving

from Jamaica in 1803 (Parry and Sherlock 1972:169). However, a portion of the French troops remained in the Spanish section of the island and helped repel, alongside local Spanish *criollo* militia, an invasion of Santo Domingo by Haitian forces in 1805 led by Dessalines and Christophe. This invasion by Haitian forces was accompanied by the large-scale destruction of property and the massacre of many of the inhabitants living in the Cibao (Bell 1981:23).

The actions of the Haitian soldiers who invaded Santo Domingo in 1805 were particularly brutal. The inhabitants of the Cibao were victims of rape, torture, looting, and murder. These activities were sanctioned by the the Haitian generals Christophe and Dessalines (Welles 1966:35-38). Large regions of the Cibao and around Santo Domingo were practically depopulated, the towns pillaged and burned, as a result of the depredations of the Haitian forces. Monte Cristi, San José de las Matas, Montepleta, Cotuí, and San Francisco de Macorís were just a few of the towns pillaged and put to the torch by the Haitian forces during the invasion of 1805 (Mejía-Ricart 1954:158).

This time the Haitian troops were defeated and driven back over the border into Haiti. However, Santo Domingo was still under the control of the French army during this period. French forces remained in Santo Domingo until 1809. In this year, the colonists rebelled against the French. With the arrival of an English fleet off the shores of Santo Domingo who helped the rebel forces, the French troops were driven out of Santo Domingo, and the colony reverted to its former Spanish colonial status once again.

Juan Sánchez Ramírez, who had organized the rebellion against the French forces, was proclaimed governor in 1809 (Bell 1981:23). He was an able administrator who initiated the development of *ayuntamientos* (town halls) in all the major cities and towns in the colony, a system still used today (Welles 1966:45). Unfortunately, Juan Sánchez Ramírez' able leadership lasted only a few years and he died in 1811. His replacement was Governor Urutia, a Spaniard sent to rule the colony by the Crown, and a far less

able administrator. The following twelve years was a time when the colony was largely neglected by the authorities in Spain. This period is popularly referred to as *España Boba* [silly Spain] (Moya Pons 1977:401). Ignored by Spain, and poorly administered by its appointees, prominent colonists declared their independence from Spain in 1821.

José Nuñez de Cáceres became the first president. He declared that the former colony of Santo Domingo was hence forth to be called the independent nation of Spanish Haiti. Cáceres sought to unite the newly liberated nation with Bolívar's *Gran Colombia* confederation (Bell 1981:24). This dream never was to be realized. Under the leadership of José Nuñez de Cáceres the independence of Spanish Haiti lasted only nine weeks (Wiarda 1969:27). In February 1822, Haitian soldiers, under the leadership of President Jean Pierre Boyer, invaded Spanish Haiti and quickly overran the country. After this easy conquest Boyer declared the two parts unified as one under his leadership.

The Haitian occupation of the Spanish-speaking part of Hispaniola lasted from 1822-1844. During this period much of the colony's Spanish heritage came under attack. The official policies adopted by the Haitian leadership reflected their French origin. They attempted to change the institutional structures already in place to those based on the French system (Moya Pons 1986:19). The system of law changed, with the Spanish customary law being replaced by the Code Napoléon (Bell 1981:25). The University of Santo Domingo was closed by Haitian authorities since it lacked students and teachers. Slavery was, for once and for all, abolished in the Spanish-speaking parts of Hispaniola. The concept of communal property was alien to Haitian law, which recognized the ownership of land only by the State or by the individual. Using this as a pretext, land was confiscated by the Haitian government from the Church and from any land-owners who had emigrated or been exiled, even though their sons or daughters may have remained on the island they were not legally able to claim title to this land (Black 1986a:18). The Church was particularly hurt by the occupation. The



Haitian government ruled that all Church owned houses, lots, pastures were forfeit to the State (Clausner 1973:85).

It was this long occupation that helped spawn the great enmity felt by Dominicans for everything Haitian. Even today, to call someone a Haitian or African is considered one of the worst insults one Dominican can give to another. Sumner Welles claimed the Haitian occupation had the effect of shaping the Dominican world view in the following manner: "the systematic oppression of their Haitian overlords, the terror which the methods of repression employed created among the Dominicans, eventually stifled not only all semblance of concerted public spirit, but even crushed the normal instincts of virile pride in the individual" (1966:54-55). He even went so far as to blame the corruption and nepotism found in the Dominican public institutions, in part, as a result of the long Haitian occupation. On the other hand, Bell stated, "twenty-two years of Haitian occupation was needed to create the idea of Dominican nationality" (1981:25). Hatred of the Haitian occupiers, and of things Haitian, helped create a Dominican national consciousness and unite the inhabitants of what was then called the *Partie de l'Est* against the invader, and continues to help define what it means to be a Dominican today.

#### Puerto Plata in the early nineteenth century: 1812-1865

The Dominicans obtained their independence once again in 1844. For the sake of brevity, I will not detail the development of the independence movement called La Trinitaria except to say that it was founded in 1838 by nine individuals whose goal was to force the Haitian overlords out of the Spanish-speaking part of Hispaniola and create a separate nation. Duarte, Mella, and Sánchez are names that every Dominican child learns to honor. On February 27, 1844, independence was proclaimed, and after defeating the troops sent by the Haitian President Hérard to put down the rebellion, was

achieved by summer of the same year. While sporadic invasions and border conflicts were to continue for many years, the birth of the first republic in 1844 marks the beginning of the Dominican nation.

Not all regions in the Dominican Republic languished during the Haitian occupation. Puerto Plata was one of the few regions that flourished during this period. A group of citizens within the city actually supported the Haitian intervention in 1822, speaking out in favor of unification with Haiti as early as December, 1821 (Moya Pons 1977:420). Partly because of its political reliability, and partly because of its geographical location, Puerto Plata experienced a degree of economic prosperity during the Haitian occupation not experienced by other regions.

The nineteenth century should be considered the "Golden Age" for this northern coastal city. It was during the nineteenth century that the port reached its zenith as the most important terminal for the country's exports. During the Haitian occupation of Santo Domingo, Puerto Plata was a busy port and the district became an important agricultural center. Hazard writes that during this period "it was a flourishing place, possessing handsome houses and stores," and that, "the streets were paved, and on the hills surrounding the town were a great many very well conducted coffee estates" (1873:177-178). The declaration of independence had little effect on the commerce of the region and the port continued to flourish.

As early as 1812, when the commercial life of most ports on the colony was dead, Puerto Plata was engaged in the small, but lucrative, tobacco trade with Europe (Welles 1966:47). For the first three centuries of its existence, the principal export for the colony of Santo Domingo had been cattle and their by-products (Moya Pons 1977:409). The nineteenth century saw the rise in the importance of tobacco as a Dominican export. For most of the nineteenth century it was the premier export until, in the last decades of the century, the development of a large-scale sugar industry was initiated.

Economic production in the Dominican Republic during the nineteenth century was regionally specialized (Moya Pons 1986:150). Puerto Plata, because of its location near the prime tobacco farms in the Cibao, became an important shipping terminal for the nation's tobacco. To the south, the port of Santo Domingo remained the most important transshipping point for cattle products and lumber (Moya Pons 1986:150).

Puerto Plata was an international city during the nineteenth century. Its residents were composed of citizens from many countries. By far, the largest group of foreigners living in the city were Germans from Hamburg; it was these merchants who monopolized the tobacco trade (Zeller 1977:27). But not all inhabitants of Puerto Plata were *criollos* or of European descent; one hundred families of Afro-American freemen from the United States and fifty families of recently freed slaves, all from the southern U. S. plantation of a Scotsman named Kingsley, were resettled in the city during the year 1824, by the order of President Boyer (Zeller 1977:28). Cubans, U.S. citizens, Haitians, Puerto Ricans, Chinese, and even a token Mexican, Peruvian, and Chilean, made their homes in the city (Zeller 1977:28-29).

A large group of English-speaking Antilleans, numbering approximately eighty families, lived in a neighborhood referred to as the "Turkilancito" (Zeller 1977:28). These individuals were primarily negroes from the English islands of Nassau (Bahamas, Turks and Caicos), St. Thomas, and Jamaica (Hazard 1873:181). The Antillean women made their living from washing clothes, while the men worked, when they could, as general laborers (Hazard 1873:181).

Throughout the nineteenth century, tobacco, coffee, and sugar were shipped from Puerto Plata. The importance of Puerto Plata as the center of commerce for Santo Domingo in the early and middle parts of the nineteenth century cannot be understated. It was the revenues from this port which provided the main source of income for the governmental coffers:

The merchant [*of Puerto Plata* ] contributed to the financing of government in two ways: indirectly, inasmuch as the custom duties for import and export formed the most important source of state income; and directly, because many merchants acted as moneylenders for the government, in return for which they were granted exemptions from the import or export duties. (Hoetink 1982:69)

As previously mentioned, it was tobacco which formed the backbone of the city's international trade. Hoetink quotes Pedro F. Bonó as saying that tobacco was "the true Father of the Country" (1982:68). Bonó argued that tobacco promoted economic diversification more than any other type of agricultural production extant during the nineteenth century:

It [*tobacco* ] is the basis of our infant democracy because of the balance in which it maintains the fortunes of individuals, and from that it becomes the most serious obstacle for possible oligarchies; it was and is the firmest support of our autonomy, and it is ultimately what maintains in great part the Republic's internal trade because of the changes it produces in the industries that it promotes and needs. (quoted in Hoetink 1982:68)

The other industries which tobacco cultivation helped support included such industries as transportation, textile, bale-tobacco, and the manufacture of palm-leaf fabric (Hoetink 1982:68).

During the years of the First Republic (1844-1861), Puerto Plata continued to grow and was considered one of the fairest cities in the Republic. In 1861, the country once again became a colony of Spain as the result of the political manipulations of then president Pedro Santana (Moya Pons 1986:178). This second period of being under Spanish domination lasted only four years and four months. In part, the rationale for returning into the colonial fold of Spain was to obtain protection and security from the threat of invasion by Haiti, a phobia which had led the Dominican presidents Báez and Santana to seek possible unification with France, the United States, and Spain (Bell 1981:46). At that time, only Spain took the offer of union seriously and reunification was declared in 1861. Due to lackluster Spanish administration, and a Dominican



populace that had little desire to once again become part of a colonial economic system, armed conflict between Dominicans and Spanish forces soon broke out.

The War of Restoration (1863-1865) marks the historical beginnings of the town of Luperón. It was during these two years of bitter warfare that the importance of the Bahía de Gracias as a safe location for the de-embarkation of war materials was realized. *Luperonenses* consider the year 1863 as the year their town was founded. According to local historians, the Puerto Cantonal de Blanco was founded by sailors and soldiers fighting against the Spanish troops. In 1863, arms shipped to the soldiers fighting under General Gregorio Luperón were being landed near the present location of Luperón. Previously, the bay had been called Bahía de Gracias (the name given by Columbus) or Puerto Caballo (the name foreigners had used since the seventeenth century). In 1830, British naval Captain Richard Owen had explored the anchorages of the north coast and had concluded that Puerto Caballo, while having a narrow entrance, offered better protection as a harbor than those of Puerto Plata or Isabela (quoted in Rodríguez Demorizi 1958:321). It was in this secure, but secluded location, that much of the ordinance used by the Dominicans fighting the Spanish in the Cibao and Puerto Plata district was off-loaded.

The hostilities between the Dominicans and Spanish forces during the War of Restoration were particularly bitter in the Cibao and along the northern coastal regions. A declaration of independence was signed on September 14, 1863, by Dominican leaders in Santiago proclaiming Dominican sovereignty and the formation of a provisional government led by General José Antonio Salcedo (Welles 1966:256). Included among the signatories were the military and political leaders of the independence movement; Gaspar Polanco, Gregorio Luperón, José Antonio Salcedo, Benito Monción, Benigno F. de Rojas, P. Pujol, J. Belisario Curiel, and Pedro Francisco Bonó (Gimbernard Pellerano 1969:350).

Moya Pons believes that the War of Restoration was a conflict that succeeded in unifying the Dominicans by mobilizing the whole nation against the Spanish invaders and that the war helped solidify the nascent sense of a national identity already present (1986:20). However, he believes this was tempered by a negative legacy of the war. The nation was splintered into many bands of armed camps after the war, furthering a climate of political instability, which resulted in the rise and fall of over twenty different governments during the fourteen years after the Spanish were forced out [1865-1879] (Moya Pons 1986:20).

There was a great deal of in fighting among the Dominican leaders during the war. The first provisional president, José Antonio Salcedo, was overthrown in 1864, by his self-declared successor General Gaspar Polanco. Polanco had Salcedo taken as a prisoner to Puerto Plata, where he was subsequently assassinated by soldiers following Polanco's directives (Welles 1966:284). Polanco, himself, was to last only three months in office (Bell 1981:51-52). He was succeeded as provisional president by Benigno Filomeno Rojas. These rapid changes in governmental leadership, often by violent means, were to set the pattern for government during the next several decades in the Dominican Republic.

In 1863, the Spanish, hoping to seek a military solution to the conflict in the colony, sent reinforcements to Puerto Plata composed of troops previously stationed in Cuba. These troops, together with the 1,000 already garrisoning Puerto Plata, totaled over 3,000 men (Welles 1966:252). They marched from Puerto Plata in late August 1863, heading towards Santiago to relieve the beleaguered Spanish garrison under siege by Dominican troops at the time. These fresh troops from Puerto Plata succeeded in lifting the siege for a few days, only to find the combined Spanish force trapped and encircled by superior Dominican forces. The Spaniards capitulated to the Dominican forces with the understanding that they would leave all their arms and supplies intact (Welles 1966:252). This they failed to do. Blowing up their stores of gunpowder before

vacating the fort of San Luis in Santiago, they brought the wrath of the Dominican forces upon them. The Dominicans attack in force and, during the ensuing route to Puerto Plata which lasted three days, only half the Spanish troops reached the safe haven of the port city (Welles 1966:252).

The city of Puerto Plata suffered greatly during the war. In September 1863, during the pursuit of the Spanish forces from Santiago, Dominican troops entered the city, forcing the Spanish to seek refuge in the fort. The Dominicans following their scorched-earth policy burned most of the buildings in the city (Rodríguez Demorizi 1963:101). The Dominican took control of all parts of the city except the fort. A Spanish ship lying in the harbor bombarded the city causing further destruction of the few remaining structures (Welles 1966:253).

During the war Spanish troops retained control of the fort located at the mouth of the harbor, but control of the city of Puerto Plata alternated between the Spanish and Dominican forces. During the Spanish withdrawal in June 1865, by the orders of the Spanish command, the remaining buildings were destroyed by the Spanish troops evacuating the city (Rodríguez Demorizi 1963:531). Eight years later when Samuel Hazard visited the seaport, he wrote of the town's "mud and filth, narrow streets shrouded in darkness, swarthy faces, and very very humble habitations" (1873:176). He concluded that Puerto Plata had "at one time been a place of very great importance and solid structures," this being "evident from the ruins of many of the warehouses and buildings still standing, which are composed of stone" (Hazard 1873:176). In 1992, many of these stone structures have been removed, but the skeletons of others still exist near the port in the same condition as observed by Hazard. These structures bear a mute testimony to the viciousness of the fighting during the War of Restoration.

### The District of Puerto Plata from 1865 to 1900

Puerto Plata was in ruins at the end of the war. Its inhabitants returned and began the process of reconstruction. The Dominican Constitution of November 14, 1865, recognized the city of Puerto Plata to be the administrative capitol of the newly organized Distrito Marítimo de Puerto Plata (Tejada 1974:140). While the magnificence of its pre-war structures was not duplicated, its importance as a center for commerce quickly reasserted itself. The city once again was the shipping terminal for most Dominican tobacco, coffee, and cacao with the principal buyers still being the Germans from Hamburg; however, during this period there began to be a rapid increase in trade with the United States as well (Clausner 1973:107).

While the latter half of the nineteenth century was a period of economic growth for the nation, it was not a period of great economic diversification. The nation continued to rely on an economy based on agriculture. Industrial enterprises, other than innovations to improve the yield, processing, or transportation of existing agricultural enterprises, were largely absent in the country. The main growth area in the economy was the intensification of the production of sugar-cane.

Sugar began to become increasingly important during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The growth of this industry shifted the balance of power away from the *cibaeños* and *puertoplateños* to the south, where the sugar plantations were beginning to expand (Hoetink 1982:74). It was sugar which was to break the economic hegemony of the north. However, for most of the nineteenth century the Cibao and Puerto Plata were still the centers of Dominican agricultural production. It is not surprising, then, that many of the most influential Dominican statesmen of the period traced their origins to Puerto Plata. Nor should it be forgotten that frequently their rise to power was helped by the financial backing of rich entrepreneurs, both Dominican and foreign, living in Puerto Plata (Zeller 1977:32).



Gregorio Luperón, a leader of the Dominican armies during the War of Restoration and later a prominent leader of the Blue Party, was born to a humble family in Puerto Plata. An excellent leader, largely self educated, and a patriot determined to ensure his country's sovereignty, Gregorio Luperón was an idealist hoping to make the Dominican Republic a truly progressive democratic society. He helped many others on their path to the Dominican presidency, a position he himself held for a short period after President Espailat died in office in 1878 (Clausner 1973:109). It was his misfortune that those he supported in their quest for the executive office did not share the same idealistic views that he did. He was largely responsible for placing in power one of the worst tyrants in the history of the nation. This individual, Luperón's former chief of staff during the War of Restoration, was a fellow *puertoplateño* named Ulises 'Lilis' Heureaux.

Heureaux, too, was of humble origins. Born in Puerto Plata in 1845, the illegitimate son of a Haitian father and a mother from St. Thomas, both of whom had migrated to Puerto Plata, Heureaux's rise to power was solely the result of machinations by Luperón (Welles 1966:446). He was to poorly repay Luperón's faith in him. Heureaux began his presidency in 1882 and for several years continuing the facade of leading a democratic nation. As the years of his rein passed, he showed no scruples in eliminating any opposition. Luperón and other potential opposition leaders were forced into exile, less prominent opposition members taken as prisoners were tortured and throw to sharks, and a system of secret agents reported on the sentiments of his countrymen living in the country or abroad (Rodman 1964:102). Heureaux was to meet his demise in 1898 at the hands of an assassin, and a future Dominican president, named Ramón Cáceres.

Heureaux, as an authoritarian Dominican leader, was to presage the tyranny of Trujillo in the twentieth century. For all his faults, Heureaux was interested in developing some semblance of a modern nation. During his regime, often with money

borrowed from foreign investors, such modern conveniences as the telegraph, railways, and roads were constructed. He always remembered fondly the city of his birth. He once wrote to a minister, "you know that I am from Puerto Plata, which is the only corner where I want to have the right to be something personally" (quoted in Hoetink 1982:51). Under his tutelage, the city was the beneficiary of many of these projects.

The bleak, dark, muddy streets and poorly constructed homes described by Samuel Hazard during his visit to Puerto Plata in 1873, were to disappear by the end of the nineteenth century. The reliance on mule trains to carry people and cargo over the mountains from Santiago to Puerto Plata was soon a thing of the past. With General Luperón as its sponsor, a road was constructed between Santiago and Puerto Plata in 1879 (Zeller 1977:33). By 1885, a telegraph line had been installed between Puerto Plata and Santiago by the French company Société des Télégraphes Sous-marins (Hoetink 1982:56). Construction of a railway linking Santiago and Puerto Plata, over 68 kilometers of mountainous terrain, was begun in 1890 by the state controlled company Ferrocarril Central Dominicano; financing for this project originally came from the Dutch banking house Westendorp who sold its option in this enterprise in 1892 to the San Domingo Improvement Co. situated in New York (Hoetink 1982:52).

The construction of this railway line was not without its opponents. Tulio Cestero wrote that to continue the La Vega - Santiago railway to Monte Cristi would have cost only one-half the price of the Puerto Plata -Santiago line, and would have been of more strategic importance (quoted in Zeller 1977:33-34). A proponent of the Puerto Plata - Santiago line offered these reasons for favoring this route: (1) the established interest between Santiago and Puerto Plata (commercial); (2) the short distance involved; (3) the more fertile lands crossed; and finally, (4) Puerto Plata provided a better port than Monte Cristi with almost 100 years of experience in international trade (quoted in Zeller 1977:34). While President Ulises Heureaux was in office, there was never a doubt concerning which port city would benefit. The route of the Puerto Plata - Santiago line

skirted the borders of Luperón, having stops at Imbert, Pérez, and Altamira, all within easy journey of the farms and ranches located in the, yet to be, incorporated *municipio*.

The end of the nineteenth century would still find the district of Puerto Plata one of the most economically important regions of the country. While it had been surpassed by the port of Santo Domingo [U.S. \$505,048] in the amount of customs duties collected, it still collected the second largest amount of tax revenue in the nation [U.S. \$368,687] (Hoetink 1982:65). The burnt city of 1865 had, by 1897, rebuilt itself. The city in 1897 contained 1,317 houses, the majority constructed of wood with zinc roofs (Zeller 1977:42). The city contained a theater, two parks planted with flowers, a yacht club, and a variety of intellectual, philanthropic, and recreational societies (Zeller 1977:43). In 1900, Tulio Cestero wrote that Puerto Plata "is the most beautiful and cleanest city in the Republic" (quoted in Zeller 1977:42).

#### The Town of Blanco and the *Municipio* of Luperón 1863 - 1950

Luperón, too, experienced growth as more settlers came into the area during the last half of the nineteenth century. Sources from this period are extremely limited, but oral histories from several descendants of the first inhabitants of the *municipio* help give an idea of the social life during this period. The rich lands near the Bajabonico river were ideal for crops and pasture. This land was occupied quite early in the nineteenth century by several large landowners devoted to cattle raising and horse breeding. The small village of Blanco founded in 1863, and located on the shores of the Bahía de Gracias, remained a small agricultural community throughout the nineteenth century. Local historians informed me that even in the 1860s the principal crops were tobacco and maize. The introduction of the road and, later, the railway was to make the transportation of agricultural produce to the markets of Puerto Plata and Santiago much easier in the last years of the century. The vast majority of small landowners during the

late nineteenth century raised both subsistence crops and a least one cash crop . Typically, the small farmer in the region would grow either tobacco or cotton for the market.

The origin of the name Blanco for the town is still a source of mystery for its present inhabitants. Several inhabitants knowledgeable in the historical lore of the community offered contrasting views concerning its origin. The least likely explanation, offered by one older inhabitant, is that the name was given to the town because of the white sands found on the beaches along the coasts near the town. A more plausible explanation, offered independently by two inhabitants, one a well read teacher in the community who has had several students write papers on the subject, and the other being an older storekeeper who has lived his whole life in the town and maintained a strong interest in its history, states the name Blanco was given to the village in honor of the principal landowner of the area during the 1860s. It is interesting to note that while several of the street names found in the town of Luperón today honor early inhabitants of the community, such as Calle Juanico Cueto and Calle Francisco Morrobel, but there is no street called Blanco. Five different individuals, whose knowledge of the region's history was quite broad, all told me that the principal landowner in the 1860s was Francisco Morrobel, the same individual who had a street named in his honor. Who was Blanco? This remains a mystery. Even Mario Concepción, who wrote an interesting article on place names in the Dominican Republic, only identifies Blanco as the original name of the town and that it was changed to Luperón in 1927 to honor of the most famous of *puertoplateños* , Gregorio Luperón (1975:102).

The travel account of Samuel Hazard gives an insight into the life of the region as it was in 1873. On his journey from Santiago to Puerto Plata, Hazard traversed the lands now included within the boundaries of the *municipio*. In the following passage he described the land and the agricultural practices of its inhabitants living inland in the region at the time:



We were on the bottom lands along the coast, where we met with plenty of natural clearings on the hillside or in the bottoms. Most of these were occupied by settlers, growing tobacco, coffee (wild), the plantain, and a great deal of fine cotton - fine staple and good length. One of these places presented quite an American appearance, the house having piazzas, and the first grape-vine-covered arbour I had seen on the island. The soil everywhere was of the best black loam, unmistakable in its richness, and capable, as all the inhabitants told me, of producing everything in the shape of vegetation. . . .

All the people of this section devote themselves principally to the tobacco culture, paying no attention to cattle, though they own large numbers of hogs. These are allowed to run wild and take care of themselves, and this they have learned to do to such an extent, that every spot where there is anything planted has to be surrounded with a strong fence of withes to prevent their entrance. (Hazard 1873:373)

Continuing on his journey to the ruins of La Isabela, he mentions the thick foliage and extensive growth of hardwood trees found in the area (Hazard 1873:375). Logging constituted an important source of employment for many of the inhabitants living along the coast, with mahogany and fustic being the most sought after timber (Hazard 1873:375). While the timber was cut with the most elementary of tools, no saw was used according to Hazard, this local industry was part of an international enterprise (Hazard 1873:375). Hazard described the industry as being conducted in the following manner:

This shipping of mahogany is quite a business with the coast people, as they haul or float these logs down to some convenient bay or inlet, where smaller vessels or lighters convey them to the larger ports for shipment abroad; and in some cases, where the size of the bay permits it, the large vessels themselves come up and load directly at the port. (Hazard 1873:375)

Hazard was impressed by the fertility of the land that he crossed in 1873. However, he found the coast around La Isabela a disappointment. Of the ruins at La Isabela he wrote; "there was absolutely nothing to repay me for my trouble, the place possessing no natural beauty, and the few ruins remaining having no particular form or meaning" (Hazard 1873:377). Furthermore, he claimed the place to be a breeding ground for fever (*calentura*) because it was marshy (Hazard 1873:377). This was remarkably observant since it was written before the knowledge that such fevers (yellow fever and

malaria to name only two) were transmitted by the mosquito. Marshy areas, such as those around La Isabela, would have been prime breeding grounds for these insects.

Hazard gives us some clues about the lifestyles of the settlers living in Luperón during the late nineteenth century. Traveling along the Bajabonico river, he wrote about two distinct groups of inhabitants living in the region. The first group was composed of native Dominicans, who lived in simple huts (*bohios*), and worked as wood cutters or cultivated small plots of tobacco, plantains, coffee, and subsistence crops. Individual members of this group were described by Hazard as being negroes, signifying that they were predominantly dark skinned (Hazard 1873:381). The other group was referred to by Hazard as "planters." Some of the planters were immigrants from the United States, such as the mulatto from South Carolina that Hazard met. The "planters" lived in larger houses made of wood (Hazard 1873:378). One can assume that they were more prosperous since they were engaged in the lumber business, trading for mahogany and other timber, but Hazard has little else favorable to say of them (Hazard 1873:378). While writing little positive of the people living in Luperón, Hazard found the land to be especially attractive:

In all the north coast tract of country, from its rich soil, its fine climate, abundance of water, and general capacity to produce every tropical plant, I should say it was the most desirable part of the island, being exposed daily to the refreshing northern trade-winds. (Hazard 1873:382)

Little else is known about the region during the last decades of the nineteenth century, or during the first couple of decades of the twentieth century. In 1905, Dominican President Morales signed a decree allowing the United States to place Dominican customs under U.S. administration (Kryzanek and Wiarda 1988:31). This was the first step towards direct U.S. manipulation of Dominican affairs. U.S. President Wilson, citing political instability and failure to pay foreign debts, authorized the formal occupation of the Dominican Republic in 1916. The United States was to

remain in direct control of the Dominican Republic for the next eight years, withdrawing its troops in 1924.

One thing the U.S. military government did while it occupied the Dominican Republic was to conduct the first national census in 1920. This document provides some interesting information about the province of Puerto Plata and the *común* of Blanco, as the *municipio* of Luperón was called at the time. The population living in the province of Puerto Plata in 1920 was 58,923 inhabitants and represented 6.6 per cent of the Dominican Republic's total population (GPRD 1975:124). The province of Puerto Plata was divided into four *comunes* which were subdivided into 69 *secciones* (GPRD 1975:143). The four *comunes* had the following population totals: Puerto Plata, 25966; Altamira, 11467; Bajabonico (Imbert), 8145; and Blanco (Luperón), 13345 (GPRD 1975:143).

The population of Blanco represented just under 23 per cent of the province's population at that time. The *común* of Bajabonico, its neighbor to the north, contained only 14 per cent of the population. The low population density of *común* Bajabonico can be partially explained because the large sugar plantation and processing plant Ingenio Amistad located in the *común* had much of the arable land under cultivation. The expansion of small farms in the *común* was limited by the size of the large sugar plantation. The fact that a large foreign owned sugar plantation was located in the *común* of Bajabonico would also explain why this *común* had the second highest percentage of foreigners living in the province; some would have been employed as technicians and managers sent to oversee the operation by the owners, the South Puerto Rico Sugar Co., while a large number of the field workers are likely to have been Haitians (GPRD 1975:157).

In 1920, the port of Puerto Plata was still the busiest port in the country in terms of tonnage handled. Over 423,363 tons of materials passed through the port in 1920 (GPRD 1975:108). The number of ships entering the harbor in 1920 was only 171.

The other major ports of the island handled the following number of ships: Santo Domingo (314), San Pedro de Macorís (328), and La Romana (181) (GPRD 1975:108). These ships handled a larger number of vessels, but the vessels visiting these ports must have been loaded with smaller cargoes. The port of Blanco (Luperón) is listed in the 1920 census as being an excellent port, but whose narrow interior makes the maneuvering of large ships difficult (GPRD 1975:3). It is interesting to note that even in 1920 the harbor was still being officially referred to as both Puerto Caballo or Puerto de Gracias. This is the last official reference to the harbor as Puerto Caballo. No inhabitant living in the region today even remembers when it was called Puerto Caballo, nor was it listed on any official maps printed after 1920 as Puerto Caballo.

In 1920, Puerto Plata province had the second highest percentage of land usage, 63.2 percent, in all the nation (GPRD 1975:141). Only the province of Espaillat, with 76.3 percent of its land under cultivation, exceeded this total (GPRD 1975:141). The province of Espaillat was the smallest province in the nation at that time in area, but it had the highest population density in the country with 60 inhabitants per square kilometer (GPRD 1975:127). Puerto Plata, on the other hand, was tied for third place with the province of Santiago, having a population density of 34 inhabitants per square kilometer (GPRD 1975:127).

The *común* of Blanco, with its 526.64 square kilometers of land and a population of 13,345 inhabitants, had a much lower population density than was the norm for Puerto Plata, having only 25.34 inhabitants per square kilometer. The *común* was listed as having 2,890 individuals who had the right to vote in 1920 (GPRD 1975:149). However, the total population of voting age totaled 4,919 individuals (GPRD 1975:157). In the Dominican Republic an *acta de nacimiento* (birth certificate) is a prerequisite to obtaining a *cédula* (identity card) and an individual must have a valid *cédula* to vote. It costs a small sum of money to obtain both of these documents,



money that many individuals might not have been able to spare on the luxury of voting; hence, the discrepancy in numbers of registered versus eligible voters in the region.

Racially, the population of Blanco is recorded as being composed of 2,929 whites (22%), 1,893 blacks (14%), and 8,523 mulatto or *indio* (64%) (GPRD 1975:157). There was little difference in the ratio of males to females living in the *común*, with 6,742 males (50.5%) living in the *común* versus 6603 females (49.5%) (GPRD 1975:157). The population of Blanco was young, with over 63 percent of the population being under the age of 21 (GPRD 1975:157). The population was predominantly Catholic (at least professing to be members of this faith, they may not have been legitimately baptized as Catholics), but there were also 144 Protestants living in the *común* (GPRD 1975:157). This was the second highest concentration of Protestants in all the *comunes* in the province, only Puerto Plata had more.

The population of Blanco was fairly literate for the period. Over 23 percent of the adults were listed as being able to read (GPRD 1975:157). While this does not sound very impressive, comparing it to the *común* of Altamira where only 17 percent of the adults were literate, or to Bajabonico (Imbert), where 21 percent of the adults could read, shows that, for a rural *común*, the population of Blanco did possess a higher percentage of educated individuals than other rural areas in the province (GPRD 1975:157). Not surprisingly, Blanco surpassed both of the above mentioned *comunes* in the number of schools within its borders (19), and in the number of classrooms these schools contained (34) (GPRD 1975:118).

In 1927, the *común* changed its name from Blanco to Luperón. The town of Blanco also chose to change its name to honor General Gregorio Luperón. There seems to have been a popular movement during this period throughout the province of Puerto Plata to honor past heroes of the Republic. In 1925, the *común* of Bajabonico changed its name to Imbert to honor José María Imbert, a famous general who had defeated the

Haitian army in 1844 at Santiago, ensuring the independence of the Dominican Republic (Concepción 1975:101).

In 1930, Generalísimo Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina became president of the Dominican Republic. This marked the beginning of thirty-one years of dictatorship. His control over the nation would only end with his assassination on May 30, 1961, along a deserted highway between Ciudad Trujillo (the capitol had been renamed in his honor in 1936) and one of his favorite estates in San Cristóbal. Trujillo had an appetite unparalleled in Dominican history for wealth and honors. At the time of his death, Trujillo was believed to have been one of the richest men in the world, with an estimated fortune between several hundred million and a billion dollars (Black 1986a:27).

The Dominican Republic experienced an economic boom period during the 1940s and 1950s, but most of this economic growth was to benefit Trujillo and his family. By the end of his regime, it is estimated that 50-60 percent of all arable land belonged to Trujillo or members of his family, and that Trujillo-owned businesses accounted for approximately 80 percent of the volume of business in Ciudad Trujillo alone (Wiarda 1969:40). The sugar plantation and the Ingenio Amistad in Imbert belonged to the son of Trujillo, Ramfis. Actually, Ramfis owned all the sugar *centrales* on the north coast at Catarey, Esperanza, Monte Llano, and Amistad, which he sold to the Bank of Agricultural and Industrial Credit for \$25 million dollars before he left the country in 1961. The cotton plantations located in the *municipio* of Luperón at Las Paredes and along the Bajabonico river at Los Bellosos also became property of the "Benefactor de la Patria, Padre de la Patria Nueva, Benefactor de la Iglesia, and the first architect, artist, doctor, scholar, educator, etc., of the Nation" during the course of his reign.

Under Trujillo, the "official" standard of living of the country is considered to have risen. This was due to the introduction of increased mechanization, increased human productivity, and expanding foreign markets (Rodman 1964:137). However, the

standard of living for the average Dominican actually improved little or worsened (Rodman 1964:137). It was through economic power that Trujillo most efficiently controlled his opposition. Estimates are that three-quarters of the employed population in the Dominican Republic worked for Trujillo either in government jobs, or on his vast assortment of agricultural, commercial, and industrial enterprises, and in this manner became obedient followers to his wishes "since the most efficient method of terror is hunger" (Wiarda 1969:41).

This economic strangle hold Trujillo held on common citizens is illustrated in the story one of my informants in Luperón told me. During the 1940s, a local landowner had a beautiful white horse that was his favorite. One day a military general saw the horse and mentioned that Trujillo was an admirer of fine horses. Once this passing remark was made the landowner had no choice but to send the horse to Trujillo as a personal gift, because if he had failed to do so, his land, animals, and possibly his life would have been forfeit. My informant mentioned that this was not an isolated case; the best of everything was reserved exclusively for Trujillo and his family.

In 1950, the third national census was conducted. It is interesting to note that Trujillo was listed on the cover of this document as the "Creator of the National Statistical Service," another of his many laudatory titles. This census was much more descriptive than the one conducted in 1920. Luperón had grown substantially during the interim. In 1950, the population density per square kilometer for the province of Puerto Plata had risen to 71.1, compared to the 34 per sq. kilometer in 1920 (ONC 1950:XV). There were 33,790 inhabitants living in the *común* of Luperón in 1950; with 1,039 listed as living in urban areas (town of Luperón), and 32,751 being classified as living in a rural setting (ONC 1950:2). The males to female ratio had hardly changed since 1920; with 17,717 males (51%) living in Luperón, and 16,613 females (49%). The population density of the *común* was still lower than the average for the province; being only 64.2 inhabitants per square kilometer (ONC 1950:5).

One of the most significant, and interesting, changes that had occurred in Luperón between 1920 and 1950 was in its racial composition. The 1920 census had listed the population as being 22 percent white, 14 percent black, and 64 percent mulatto or *indio*. The 1950 population is described as being 14 percent white, only 4 percent black, and 82 percent mulatto or *indio* (ONC 1950:64-69). This represents either a significant change from the population described in 1920. Did the population of Luperón intermarry freely in the thirty years since 1920, changing the racial composition of the *común*, or more likely, was there a difference in how the 1950 census takers classified individuals from those during the 1920 census. Perhaps the 1920 census takers, following instructions from their U.S. masters, classified individuals solely based on phenotype, or physical characteristics; while the 1950 census takers, like many Latin Americans, also made their decisions based on wealth, education, and social background. If this was true, it would explain the large variation in racial composition between the two censuses.

The 1950 census provides a picture of the social structure of the *común* during the height of the Trujillo dictatorship. The social structure of the *común* at the time reflects the following: approximately 14 percent of the inhabitants were listed as being legally married, and another 17 percent lived together in stable common-law households listed in the census as *uniones estables de facto* (ONC 1950:73). Two percent of the population were listed as widows or widowers; in this category widows composed 69 percent of the total. The longer life expectancy of females, and the fact that many of the men would immediately remarry or look for another partner to cohabit with them in order to have someone to tend the household, would explain the higher number of widows. Sixty-seven percent of the population was listed as single (ONC 1950:73). This figure is misleading since both adults and dependent children below the age of fifteen are counted in this category.



The *común* had a small foreign born population living in it in 1950. There was one male Spaniard living in the town of Luperón (ONC 1950:163). In the rural zone, a wide variety of nationalities were represented even though the total number of foreigners in the *común* was small. There were 21 foreign born inhabitants living in rural areas of the *común* (ONC 1950:172-177). There were three Cuban males, four Spanish males, four Puerto Rican males, three Haitians (two males, one female), two Syrian males, two Venezuelans (one male, one female), one female U.S. citizen, one English female, and one Lebanese male. Unfortunately, nothing more is stated in the census information about these foreigners and their occupations.

The town of Luperón contained 1,039 inhabitants living in 234 households (ONC 1950:790). These inhabitants were divided into 169 households headed by males and 65 households headed by females; the average number of related individuals living in each of these households was three (ONC 1950:790-791); however, the average household density was 4.44 indicating a significant portion of the population lived with nonrelatives in the town of Luperón. In the rural areas of the *común*, the average size of the household was slightly smaller with 3.9 individuals living under each roof (ONC 1950:794-795). Fecundity of child-bearing women in the *común* over the age of 15 was 5.18 children, with the 6,094 women in listed in this category giving birth to 31,572 children (ONC 1950:359).

Literacy had decreased slightly since 1920. In 1950, only 22 percent of the population had attended school. Of those who had attended school, 93 percent had left by the end of the fourth grade (ONC 1950:232-233). Only nine inhabitants living in Luperón are listed in the census as having finished secondary school. Also, nine individuals in the *común* had some type of university training, with four individuals having completed six years of higher education (ONC 1950:232-233). The 1950 census states that there were only 31 teachers practicing in the *común* (ONC 1950:512-513). The census provided the interesting information that some *luperonenses* going on

for advanced education opted for the following type of professional training: Nine students chose to study business; eight music; and one male student was studying languages (ONC 1950:303).

The 1950 census shows that Luperón was still predominantly an agricultural region. Occupational status was one category which clearly highlighted this agrarian focus of the *común*. There were 225 people working for the government in 1950 (ONC 1950:393). Of these 225 individuals, five were listed as being judges, lawyers, and legal aides, thirty are listed as clerical workers, and the others were listed as administrators, managers, and staff on government payroll (ONC 1950:393). Other important occupations listed in the census include the following: 149 domestics (servants); 87 small merchants and itinerant peddlers; 16 transportation professionals (truck drivers, taxi drivers, etc.); 5 individuals working in medical professions; 5 lawyers and/or judges; 4 professional woodcutters; and 9864 individuals working either as farmers, ranchers, or agricultural laborers (ONC 1950:393). Of these 9864 individuals, 6586 are listed as farmers and ranchers implying that they at least owned some land (ONC 1950:513). The other 3274 individuals listed in this category might have been day laborers, share-croppers, or both, the census does not make this clear (ONC 1950:393). Another 128 individuals are listed as workers in the tobacco or alimentary occupations (ONC 1950:395). Most likely these workers were involved in the tobacco industry, either in the curing process or in the manufacture of cigars, since this is still an important agricultural product in the region. There were no inhabitants listed in the 1950 census as being fishermen. This is interesting since several fishermen presently living in Luperón told me that they learned their trade from their fathers who had been fishing all their lives in the coastal waters off Luperón, including during the period of the Trujillo dictatorship. Perhaps, the census takers took their information from the official records listing permits purchased. Presently, local fishermen, being poor, have a tendency to avoid buying official fishing permits unless forced to do so;

this might have been true in the time of Trujillo as well. Another possible explanation for the lack of documented fishermen in 1950 is that when asked the fishermen were asked their occupations by the census takers, they, being conscious of the low status associated with fishing, gave other occupations as being their principal source of income.

The census of 1950 listed 6,726 houses in the *común* of Luperón (ONC 1950:800). There were 235 houses situated in town of Luperón of which all but one was occupied. The remaining 6,491 houses were spread throughout the rural zones of the *común*, from Cambiaso to Estero Hondo (ONC 1950:802). Of the 235 houses in Luperón, only one had walls constructed of concrete blocks, 34 had walls made of hard wood, 118 had palm siding, and 82 are listed as having "other" siding (ONC 1950:802). I interpret this "other" siding as being yagua palm panels, since this is a common construction material used by poorer inhabitants of the *municipio* today .

The town of Luperón in 1950 had one building listed as a hotel, three buildings listed as businesses, and two structures not defined which most likely were government buildings such as the police or *guardia* station and town hall (ONC 1950:809). All the 6,726 houses in the *común* had no running water, nor were there any public taps (ONC 1950:815). Eleven houses in the *común* had water tanks, 272 households obtained their water from wells, 350 households sought their water from natural springs, and the vast majority of households, 5,995, obtained their water from arroyos and rivers (ONC 1950:815).

The townspeople of Luperón received their water principally from wells, springs, and local streams (ONC 1950:817). Indoor plumbing fixtures were a rarity in the town of Luperón. Only one house is listed as having an indoor toilet. There were 231 latrines in the town and three houses had no sanitary facilities listed; one can assume that they used the facilities of their neighbors or relatives (ONC 1950:823). Electricity was available in the town and 53 houses had electric lights. The other 182 households

relied on kerosene lamps to illuminate their homes (ONC 1950:829). Most houses in the town of Luperón consisted of two or three rooms, but there were 39 houses that had five rooms, eight houses with six rooms, and three large houses with nine rooms (ONC 1950:836).

The census of 1950 gives us a composite picture of Luperón as a predominantly rural, agricultural region. Industry, aside from agricultural enterprises, was nonexistent. Infrastructural development of the *común* had not progressed beyond building a few roads for the transportation of goods and for the quick movement of military personnel. Water lines had yet to be installed and electricity was available only to a few residents of the *común* living in the town of Luperón and its immediate vicinity. In short, the *común* of Luperón had all the characteristics of a rural agrarian backwater isolated from world events. However, this was not true. In 1949, the region of Luperón was driven by force into the limelight of national and international news.

### The Invasions of Luperón: 1949 and 1959

The Trujillo regime was not without its many opponents. However, his complete mastery of the economy, national press, and military made it extremely difficult for the internal opposition to organize themselves. His efficient secret service (S.I.M.), with a vast network of both internal and international informers, learned quickly of the plans being organized to overthrow Trujillo. His secret police came quickly to arrest any individuals even suspected of attempting to undermine his totalitarian control of the nation. Thousands of Dominicans were jailed by the secret police, with hundreds being first tortured and then shot, merely for being suspected of disloyalty to Trujillo. From 1931, when the Partido Dominicano (PD) was founded by Trujillo, until 1947 when the dictator decided a nominal opposition should function to give the nation the false



trappings of being a democracy, this Trujillo political organ was the only political organization allowed on Dominican soil (Black 1986a:26).

Over the years many prominent Dominicans left the country, choosing voluntary exile abroad at the risk of having all their property in the Dominican Republic confiscated, rather than live under the domination of Trujillo. One of these voluntary exiles was Juan Bosch. An intellectual and writer of social histories, Bosch could not live in a country with such a repressive regime, and left the country in 1937. In 1939, Bosch founded the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD), a political party in exile whose goal was to restore democracy in the Dominican Republic. Joined by other Dominican exiles such as Horacio Julio Ornes, German E. Ornes, Miguel Angel Ramírez, and Juan Rodríguez, an opposition group coalesced with Bosch as its most prominent spokesperson. These Dominican exiles united with other disenfranchised Latin Americans to fight totalitarianism. This group of Dominicans, Venezuelans, Cubans, and Costa Ricans exiles called themselves the Caribbean Legion. They managed to find refuge and support in Guatemala. The Guatemalan government at the time helped shield this organization from Trujillo's attempts to eradicate it. Some Guatemalan idealists joined the Caribbean Legion and would share the fate of the exiles.

From Guatemala, the conspirators plotted to overthrow Trujillo by invading the Dominican Republic. Underestimating Trujillo's intelligence network, all of these invasions failed largely because the dictator was aware of the conspirators every move. The first serious attempt to overthrow Trujillo was the Cayo Confites affair. A group of Dominicans and Cubans, formed into a group calling themselves the Liberation Army of America (*Ejército de Liberación de América*) planned a naval invasion of the Dominican Republic (Rubin 1972:79). This aborted invasion attempt, whose members included such illustrious individuals as Fidel Castro and the first future director-general of tourism in the Dominican Republic, Angel Miolán, never left Cuban waters. Trujillo, aware of the plot, sent one of his agents to threaten Cuban President Grau San Martín

with similar attempts against his own regime if the Dominican invasion force was allowed to leave Cuban waters (Rodman 1964:153). Afraid of retribution if the invasion failed, President Grau San Martín sent Cuban naval forces to turn back the boats of the Liberation Army of America.

Two more invasion attempts were to be made against Trujillo. Both were to directly involve the inhabitants of Luperón. Unfortunately for the individuals involved, both were to meet the same tragic conclusion. In 1949, the Liberation Army of America was ready to try another invasion. This one differed from the botched attempt in 1947 in two ways: (1) it was launched from Guatemala; and, (2) the invasion forces were to enter the Dominican Republic by airplane. Supported by the president of Guatemala, Juan Arévalo, and funded in part by the rich Dominican exile "General" Juan Rodríguez, Miguel Angel Ramírez, the "Chief of Staff" of the Luperón invasion, managed to purchase six PBY Catalina seaplanes (Galíndez 1956:232). The plan was to land on the north coast of the country and the initial invasion force would link-up with an internal opposition group centered in Puerto Plata. United, this core of freedom fighters would begin an insurrection in the rural areas (Rubin 1972:79-80).

The plans began to go awry almost from the moment the planes were airborne. Flying from Lake Izabal in Guatemala on June 19, 1949, the planes were separated by bad weather. Four of the planes, unable to navigate in the weather, landed in Mexico. The occupants of these planes, including Rodríguez García and Ramírez, were interned by Mexican authorities (Bell 1981:71). Trujillo, forewarned by his intelligence apparatus, had the Dominican air force placed on alert and another of the planes was shot down off the Dominican coast (Bell 1981:71). The sixth plane, whose commander was Horacio J. Ornes, managed to land on the Bahía de Gracias.

At this point the historians differ. Galíndez claims that fifteen individuals were on the plane (1956:78). Rodman believes that fourteen members of the Liberation Army of America were in the seaplane (1964:154). Local informants who were eyewitnesses to

the invasion agree with the figure given by Galíndez, saying that there were fifteen individuals in the Catalina when it landed at Luperón. The difference may lie in the fact that the pilot, who *luperonenses* claim was an U.S. citizen and was not supposed to take part in the insurrection, is not considered a combatant by Rodman. Noncombatant or not, he had the misfortune to become a casualty of the Luperón invasion anyway.

At the time of the invasion on the evening of June 19, 1949, the town of Luperón had a small wooden dock extending out into the bay. As the plane was taxiing to the dock to unload its occupants, a member of the local *guardia* ran to the town's generator and shut off all the lights. This soldier, identified by historian Abelardo Ninita in his pro-Trujillo book Trujillo: The Biography of a Great Leader, was a certain Private Puente Rodríguez (1957:133). For his actions that night, Puente Rodríguez would be promoted to lieutenant by a grateful Trujillo (Galíndez 1973:256). This is corroborated by my informants' oral histories who said that the private who turned off the lights on the night of June 19, 1949, was promoted and later stationed in Ciudad Trujillo as a member of Trujillo's personal guard.

In the ensuing darkness, confusion among the Liberation Army members caused them to become separated. Witnesses said that fire fights between government troops and the invaders broke out near the dock and just outside the central plaza. Realizing that the invasion force had encountered unexpected resistance, the pilot and some of the freedom fighters attempted to fly away again. One account claims that the plane, attempting to take-off, took a wrong turn in the darkness and ran aground on the beach (Galíndez 1973:256). *Luperonenses* testified that the pilot did not run the plane aground on a beach; rather, the plane hit mud banks near the mangrove lined shore and tipped a wing deep into the mud bottom making it impossible to extricate. Both Galíndez's account and those present on that evening agree that a large detachment of the *guardia* soon arrived in the town of Luperón and a running battle between Trujillo's

soldiers and the invasion forces led by Horacio Julio Ornes followed (Galíndez 1973:256).

During the night of the 19th of June and during the early morning of the next day, gunfire was heard by the local villagers. Several of the invaders attempted to seek refuge in the mountains in the hope of eventually reaching the Haitian border. One of these was the leader of the expedition, Horacio Julio Ornes. The individuals who managed to escape the battle around Luperón were on the run for two days, but were captured on the morning of the 22 of June (Galíndez 1973:256). They were the fortunate ones. The other ten members of the luckless invasion force were shot down in the town or in its surrounding environs, including the luckless pilot, during the hours immediately following the landing.

My local informants mentioned that several of the Liberation Army of America members wounded during the gun battle in Luperón during the night of June 19th, 1949, were still alive in the morning. While none of my informants were able to verify this firsthand, since a complete curfew had been imposed in the town, they claim that Trujillo's soldiers took the few wounded prisoners (the informants numbers varied, either two or three individuals were believed to be still alive) to a sand pit just outside of town where they were executed by firing squad. All the bodies of the freedom fighters were buried in an unmarked grave near the sand pit.

In the town of Luperón there were no reprisals by Trujillo's forces against any suspected sympathizers. In other parts of the country, however, Trujillo used the thwarted invasion as an excuse to rid himself of any individuals suspected of aiding his external foes. German Ornes wrote that "Trujillo set in motion his machinery of repression throughout the country and in a matter of hours hundreds of political suspects, whether connected or not with the plot, were killed or imprisoned" (1958:127). Puerto Plata, being considered an opposition stronghold by Trujillo,



received particularly close attention by Trujillo's secret police and hundreds of *puertoplateños* were killed in the following days (Ornes 1958:127).

Horacio J. Ornes and the other four men captured in the hills were taken to the capitol for a public trial. Found guilty of treason, they were sentenced to thirty years in prison at hard labor (Ornes 1958:306). The following year, the Trujillo Congress on February 20, 1950, declared an amnesty and all five prisoners were freed and sent into exile (Ornes 1958:306). One reason cited for Trujillo approving the amnesty of these individuals was that he hoped the men would publicly declared that "communists" had helped support the invasion (Rodman 19654:154). Another viewpoint is that Trujillo wanted to demonstrate to the world his clemency and increase his standing in world opinion as a benevolent leader (Bell 1981:71).

Several of the men killed during the June 19, 1949, invasion were Guatemalans. Several *luperonenses* remember that in 1950 several families came to the town looking for the bodies of their sons. Trujillo permitted them entry into the country after the amnesty was declared and the bodies of these individuals were taken back to their country for burial. No one is certain what has happened to the remaining graves. Several informants believe they were re-interred elsewhere, but are not clear as to where. Today a monument commemorating the members of the ill-fated 1949 invasion of Luperón stands near the town dock.

This was not the last invasion against Trujillo to be launched on the shores of the *municipio*. History was to repeat itself on a larger scale in 1959. The invasion of Maimon, Constanza, and Estero Hondo which began on June 14, 1959, involved hundreds of anti-Trujillistas hoping to spark a rebellion throughout the country. Backed by President Betancourt and Fidel Castro, this invasion again was doomed because of Trujillo's prior knowledge of the plot (Rubin 1972:100).

On June 14, 1959, an airborne landing in the mountain town of Constanza marked the beginning of the invasion. Fifty-six men, including Cubans, Guatemalans,

Venezuelans, Spaniards, and one U.S. citizen, landed at Constanza on a C-46 transport plane (CARIB 1959:10). Troops loyal to Trujillo were waiting for the invaders and the few that escaped were pursued, with the help of local civilians, by combined elements of his army and air force (Bell 1981:73). Within two weeks all members of this expeditionary force were either dead in the hills or in Trujillo's prisons.

Six days later, on June 20, 1959, the naval invasion of Estero Hondo (part of the *común* of Luperón at the time) and Maimon (just to the east of Luperón but part of the *común* of Puerto Plata) was attempted. This poorly planned assault turned into a massacre. Arturo Espaillat, Trujillo's head of military intelligence, wrote in his memoirs that "not only had Trujillo's spies reported the departure of the invasion force, his communications men were also monitoring the very transmissions which boasted that the invasion would be a big surprise" (1963:155).

The invasion force was divided into two groups traveling on the yachts "Carmen Elsa" and "Tinina." The "Carmen Elsa" force headed for the coast at Maimon. The "Tinina" force headed for the coast at Estero Hondo. Both groups were attacked from the sea and the air (CARIB 1959:78). The boats were sunk off the coast, but many of the invaders managed to reach the shore. Here, they found Trujillo's troops and various bands of hostile civilians waiting. Unlike a few fortunate members of the Constanza fiasco, no prisoners were taken either at Maimon or Estero Hondo (CARIB 1959:104). Trujillo propagandists played up the help local inhabitants of Maimon and Estero Hondo gave the troops in repelling the invasion force. To quote the propaganda printed by CARIB, "the campesinos, whom the Trujillo regime has provided with land, homes, subsidies and other aid as much as 20 years ago, are unshakably loyal to the Government," and "armed with machetes and a few fire arms the campesinos are swarming over the hills in both areas in a vast manhunt of fugitive invaders" (1959:73).

After almost thirty years of being subjected to the cult of Trujillo through the schools, radio, newspapers, and on public billboards, it is likely that the inhabitants did

help government forces. With the invasion force being labelled communist led and whose goals were to nationalize the land, the politically conservative *campesinos*, whose welfare depended on the small parcels of land they owned, were easily convinced by the government propaganda that this force was a major threat to their lives. How many inhabitants of Maimon, Constanza, and Estero Hondo actually helped fight the invasion force will never be known. However, those that did aid the government troops provided Trujillo with excellent propaganda material. He used these stories to show the world press that Dominicans were fully in support of his regime at a time when his international stature was turning into that of a pariah.

To celebrate the victories of Luperón and Constanza, Maimon, and Estero Hondo, in 1960 Trujillo had a monument erected in the plaza "Julio Molina" in Luperón to honor the glory of the 19th of June (Armando Lora 1985:98). In 1992, the monument is still there. It has been defaced and only a few words are legible, but one can clearly read the words "Betancourt" and "traitor." As a typical sign of the times, a sign advertising "Alfred's hand-painted t-shirts" has been painted on the back of the stone monument. On June 19, 1990, a small monument consisting of a concrete block, topped by a simple white cross was erected in the town of Luperón at the point where the town's pier meets the land. The inscription reads "*Loor a los héroes caídos en la gesta heroica del 19 de Junio 1949, que marcó el inicio del término de la oprobiosa tiranía Trujillista*" (Praise to the fallen heroes at the heroic feat of June 19, 1949, that marked the beginning of the end of the opprobrious Trujillo tyranny).

#### Luperón: 1960-1989

In the Dominican census of 1960, all the districts of the province of Puerto Plata are no longer called *comunes*. The term *municipio* was adopted and continues to be used to this day. The population of the *municipio* of Luperón had risen by 1960 to 40,067

inhabitants (DGEC 1961a:9). This represented a 18.6 percent increase in the total population over the course of the preceding decade. The population of the town of Luperón increased to 1,548 inhabitants living in 298 domiciles (DGEC 1961a:9). The growth rate of the town population was 49 percent; over two and one-half times the rate of growth for the rural parts of the *municipio*. The average number of persons living in each household had increased from 3.0 in 1950 to 5.19 in 1960.

The population density of the *municipio* had risen to 76.08 per square kilometer by 1960 (DGEC 1961a:16). The whole region is documented to have contained 7,662 houses, with a density of 14.55 houses per square kilometer (DGEC 1961a:16). In the rural *secciones*, the average number of inhabitants per household was 5.23 (DGEC 1961b:13). Of the nine *secciones* in the *municipio*, the variation in household density ranged from a high of 5.7 for the *sección* Unijica, to a low of 4.71 in the *sección* of La Sabana located adjacent to the town of Luperón (DGEC 1961b:13).

In 1961, by the decree of law number 5731, the municipal district of Los Hidalgos was created by taking land away from the *municipio* of Luperón (ONE 1966:109). The three most densely populated *secciones*, located on the far western edge of the *municipio* of Luperón, El Mamey, Marmolejos, and Unijica were united to form Los Hidalgos. In 1961, the newly formed Los Hidalgos had a total population of 14,450 (ONE 1966:93). The *municipio* of Luperón had been reduce to a population of 25,880 inhabitants (ONE 1966:93). This represented the loss of 36 percent of the *municipio's* population. The number of houses in the newly down-sized *municipio* of Luperón was 5,145 and each household had an average density of 5.03 occupants (ONE 1966:93).

When the fifth national census was taken in January 1970, the population of the *municipio* of Luperón had risen to 30,421 (ONE 1976a:5). The sex ratio in Luperón at the time was 15,464 males (51.7%) and 14,551 (48.3%) females (ONE 1976a:5). The population of the town of Luperón had grown to 2,046 inhabitants (ONE 1976a:5). The town's population was composed of 986 males (48.2%) and 1,060 females



(51.8%) (ONE 1976a:5). The population density for the province of Puerto Plata had risen to 98.9 inhabitants per square kilometer by 1970 (ONE 1976a:xv). The city of Puerto Plata was listed as the eighth largest urban center in the country (ONE 1976a:10). Throughout the province, almost one-half of the population was under the age of 15 (ONE 1976a:38). In the *municipio* of Luperón, the majority of the population (15,227 individuals or 50 %) was under the age of 15 (ONE 1976a:38). Forty-six percent of the population was between the ages of 15 and 64, while less than four percent of the population was 65 or older (ONE 1976a:38). In the *municipio* of Luperón, the population of children between the ages of 7 and 14 eligible to go to school in 1970 was 7,704 (ONE 1976b:519). Of those eligible to attend school, 4838 matriculated (62.8%), 2355 did not go to school (30.6%), and 511 (6.6%) individuals are listed as information unavailable (ONE 1976b:519).

By 1989, the unofficial population of the *municipio* had risen to 38,000 inhabitants. This is the figure the *síndico* (elected representative) of the *municipio* had obtained in an informal census conducted during the preceding year. According to his figures, there were approximately 6,000 individuals living in urban zones (this refers to the *sección* of Luperón including the town of Luperón and lands immediately adjacent). These figures must be considered as approximations and the official 1990 census information is still not available. There are a large number of individuals who are registered as residents of the *municipio* for voting purposes, but actually live elsewhere. There are also a number of individuals living in the town of Luperón who work at the Luperón Beach Resort hotel, but are officially registered residents of other *municipios*. This makes all figures for town and *municipio* population size suspect as to their accuracy.

During 1989, the *municipio* of Luperón was once more reduced in size. The *sección* of Estero Hondo and lands west of the Bajabonico river were separated from the *municipio* of Luperón and combined with the municipal district of Los Hidalgos to form the new *municipio* of Isabela. Since that time no new census has been conducted.

There was great consternation among the residents of Luperón that the ruins of the archaeological site of La Isabela was to be included in the new *municipio*. Rallies and political pressure from various local political and economic leaders convinced officials in Puerto Plata to allow this part of the municipio to remain part of Luperón. Local inhabitants take great pride in their history, but the economic benefits derived from having this site within the confines of the *municipio* were certainly important to motivate some *luperonenses* as well.

### The Introduction of Enclave Tourism in Luperón

The north coast of the Dominican Republic was zoned for tourism development in the late 1960s. Included in the initial plans was a tourist zone radiating outward from the city of Puerto Plata to the east and west, with the westernmost point of the initial zone being the *municipio* of Luperón. The historical interest of Luperón as a tourist attraction has already been described in this chapter, but because of the region's relative isolation from tourist ports of entry, and its lack of facilities to accommodate large numbers of tourists, it was not until the 1980s that the immediate impact of tourism began to be felt.

In the mid-1970s, work on a government designed development plan for the province of Puerto Plata, called the *Proyecto Turístico de Puerto Plata*, was initiated (ALIFD 1977:175). During the first decade of the project, concerns centered on developing the area between the city of Puerto Plata and Sosúa. An international airport, improved roads, potable water supplies, sewage treatment facilities, telecommunications, and a government-run hotel, serving as a training center for future hotel workers, were either constructed from scratch or improved (ALIFD 1977:175). By 1985, there were plans to have approximately 6,000 tourist rooms available for international tourists in Sosúa and Puerto Plata alone (ONAPLAN 1978:122-124).

Initial plans to locate an international tourist resort in the area surrounding Luperón most likely began in the late 1970s, with investors scouting potential locations. Two of the wealthiest individuals in Luperón, brothers, owned a large tract of land located on the western side of the bay's entrance. The land had previously been used for grazing dairy cattle. This land lacked a permanent source of water and, because of its location near the sea, the soil was of a poor quality for growing crops and the brothers were willing to sell the property for a large sum of money. Two rich Dominican investors, with financing from the Banco Cibao, purchased the land totaling over 1,300,000 square meters.

The new owners created a company and called the development project Ciudad Marina. The long term plans for the project include the creation of two first-class international hotels, the Luperón Beach Resort and the Hotel de Cerro, a private marina, an heliport, a professional tennis villa, condominiums, and an eighteen hole golf course designed by Pete Dye. Construction on the project began in 1982. *Luperonenses* who were skilled craftsmen found employment during the construction of Ciudad Marina and, to this day, many local inhabitants still refer to the complex as "*el proyecto*," the project.

When I visited the town in 1986, I found the entrance to Ciudad Marina already closed by guard stations and an barred gate. Roads had been paved in the complex and construction on the Luperón Beach Resort hotel was well underway. Several villas and condominiums were also under construction to serve as model homes for potential buyers. The town, as yet, had not begun to diversify its economy to accommodate tourists. Gift shops and tourist restaurants were still a thing in the future. In December 1987, the Luperón Beach Resort hotel, with most of its planned 310 rooms completed, opened to the public. Under the management of Dominicana de Hoteles, S.A. (Domitel), the first tourists to arrive came from Canada, Germany, Spain, and Italy. International tourism had arrived in Luperón.

### Conclusion

The advance guard of the "Golden Horde" arriving in Luperón in December 1987, were not the first foreigners to visit the region. The *municipio* had long played a peripheral part in the international struggles and economics of European and North American nations. Founded as the center for the New World colonial hopes of fifteenth century Spain, the *municipio* soon was banished to become a colonial backwater and an haunt for buccaneers and smugglers. But already by the mid-sixteenth century, despite the lack of attention given to the region by colonial authorities or perhaps because of it, the region was heavily involved in international trade, exchanging hides, tobacco, and sugar for the merchandise the Spanish authorities failed to import. During the nineteenth century the region was part of an expanding frontier, a place with rich stands of tropical hardwoods, waiting to be harvested for the international markets of Europe and North America. Those who farmed the area grew a variety of subsistence crops and tobacco or cotton for the market. Both the tobacco and cotton found their way to the industrial centers of northern Europe and North America.

Throughout its long history, the *municipio* of Luperón has been directly or indirectly involved in a global economy. The introduction of tourism into the region today is just a new phase in an already well established historical pattern. While the medium of exchange differs, with labor being substituted for traditional agricultural products, the introduction of tourism into the rural economy of Luperón provides local residents with a new economic alternative which will be integrated into their existing economic patterns. The time when new lands could be cleared as crop yields diminished in the cleared plots has passed. In an increasingly marginal environment, *luperonense* households have increasingly adopted an economic strategy focused on diversity. In this sense, the introduction of tourism provides some inhabitants the opportunity to find work in a region where traditional alternatives are diminishing all the time.



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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Tilman G. Freitag was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1958. He attended public schools in Menlo Park, California, and Lexington, Massachusetts, and graduated from Lexington High School in 1976. Till attended the University of Massachusetts at Amherst from 1976 to 1980. He spent his 1978-1979 undergraduate academic year at the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom studying history, rural sociology, and anthropology in the School for Cross-Cultural Studies. In 1980, Till earned a B.A., magna cum laude, in anthropology and a certificate of completion of a B.A. in history from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

From 1980 to 1982, Till worked in various capacities for the Harvard University Libraries and for BASF Systems Corporation in Bedford, Massachusetts. At the same time, he served as a member of the Board of Trustees at RePlace, Inc., a nonprofit crisis intervention center located in Lexington, Massachusetts. He had previously worked two years as a volunteer crisis counselor for RePlace, Inc. prior to being appointed to the Board of Trustees.


In 1983, Till chose to return to graduate school to pursue advanced studies in anthropology. He entered the master's program in anthropology at Colorado State University and focused on the prehistoric and present day coastal adaptations of the littoral populations in Mesoamerica. While at Colorado State University, he worked as a teaching assistant for the Department of Anthropology and at the University Library. He completed his M.A. in anthropology at Colorado State University and graduated in

May, 1985. After completing all requirements for his master's degree, Till went to work for Western Wyoming Archaeological Services at Western Wyoming College as an archaeological field technician. He worked in southwestern Wyoming from January to August 1985, engaged in salvage archaeology and cultural resource management work in conjunction with a large Exxon pipeline project which was underway in the region at that time.

In 1985, Till began his doctoral studies in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Florida focusing on issues of development and rural coastal populations in the circum-Caribbean basin. He was involved in the Florida Anthropology Student Association serving as vice-president in 1985-1986 and as president 1986-1987. He worked as a teaching assistant for courses in biological anthropology and human sexuality and culture. He also worked as a graduate research assistant at the Graduate School at the University of Florida.

In 1989, Till went to the Dominican Republic on a fellowship awarded by the Inter-American Foundation and spent the year studying the collateral economic effects of the introduction of a large-scale enclave tourist resort on the community of Luperón located on the north coast of the country in the province of Puerto Plata. In the same year he married his research assistant María Lidia Pilar de Freitag. They presently reside in Gainesville, Florida, where Till is continuing his research on the sociocultural and socio-economic impacts of tourism on coastal populations.

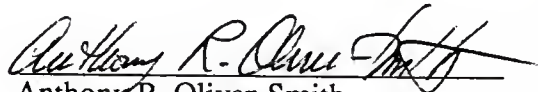
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Paul L. Doughty, Chairperson  
Distinguished Service Professor  
of Anthropology


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Anthony R. Oliver-Smith  
Professor of Anthropology


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Art Hansen  
Associate Professor of Anthropology

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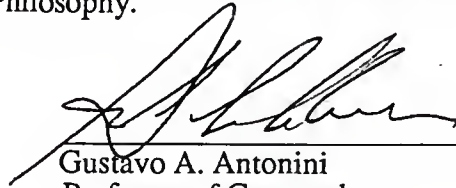


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Gerald F. Murray  
Associate Professor of Anthropology



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Gustavo A. Antonini  
Professor of Geography

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of Anthropology in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August 1993



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Dean, Graduate School

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